

**Making a Door: A Case Study of the Leadership and Change
Practices of a Principal in Bangladesh**

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Disclaimer

This work has not been previously submitted, either in part or whole, for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Dedication

To my wife, Abanti Antara

For being with me and supporting the whole journey, in good times and bad.
For her unflagging belief in me and giving me the confidence to know that I could
complete this journey.

For putting her own career on hold, taking care of me, providing me with
comfort, warmth and love.

For taking the challenge of walking through her own PhD journey.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates and reports the leadership practices of a creative and innovative principal in a Bangladeshi secondary school. In particular it examines the ways this leader has shared leadership with his teachers, has involved parents and the wider community in student learning and how he has taken students into the community to strengthen their learning of curriculum content through experiential learning. It also examines strategies the principal has used to gain the collaboration of his community and of the external committee that manages the school, and the organisational changes he has made. His innovations are significant because they offer a model of shared responsibility for engagement with teachers, students and community in the Bangladeshi context where authoritarian leadership is the more common practice. This case study offers a contribution to educational change that is drawn from working within the local context rather than being based on outside, and possibly alien, international models.

The primary data collection tool for examining initiatives and actions is an extended sequence of professional dialogues with the principal. In addition, observation, interviews and school documents as well as a reflective journal provide further data. A narrative form has been used to present his practices and intentions because the research emphasis is on the principal's perceptions and understandings. The thesis has identified the personal traits, qualities, skills and creativity that have enabled the principal to reconnoitre and strategically overcome barriers in order to improve learning outcomes and community well-being. In the words of the Bengali writer Thakur, he does transform apparent walls into doors.

While there is a large body of international literature about theory and practices of school leadership, there is little that comes from and is based in Bangladesh. However context is important; this study shows education in Bangladesh takes place under different conditions and has different needs from those that give rise

to much of the literature. This contextualised study is therefore significant for policy and further practice within Bangladesh.

This thesis offers an example of how an entrepreneurial and inspiring principal involved his teachers, students and parents in re-positioning the school and community in tackling and surmounting the overt obstacles to school improvement and significantly overcoming the gap between vision and outcomes. The detailed investigation and report show that, even in a highly centralised and seemingly restrictive system, real differences can be made and can be effective, although time has yet to tell whether they can be sustained in the long term. This study demonstrates that while there is still a lot to do in improving education in Bangladesh, it is not always necessary to look outside for effective models for change: some are being developed within the country.

This thesis highlights the importance and complex components of school leadership that have been little researched in Bangladesh. While action in one school in itself cannot make a large impact on education in the country as a whole, it can be taken as a model for inspiration and critical reflection for guiding the professional development of principals and teachers. It provides a working model that could be used and for informing policy about the selection of principals and strategic resourcing of schools. It offers a platform for further research and reflection in Bangladesh as well as informing other contexts internationally.

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Abbreviations

ADEO: Assistant District Education Officer

BANBEIS: Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics

B.Ed: Bachelor in Education

BISE: Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education

BRAC: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

DD: Deputy Director

DEO: District Education Officer

DHSE: Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education

DIA: Directorate of Inspection and Audit

ERHEC: Educational Research Human Ethics Committee

HSC: Higher Secondary Certificate

MOE: Ministry of Education

MP: Member of Parliament

NAEM: National Academy for Educational Management

NCTB: National Curriculum and Textbook Board

NGO: Non-Government Organisation

NTRCA: Non-government Teachers Registration and Certification Agency

SMC: School Managing Committee

SSC: Secondary School Certificate

TQI-SEP: Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project

TTC: Teachers' Training College

Chapter One

Introduction

I have become my own version of an optimist. If I can't make it through one door, I'll go through another door - or I'll make a door. Something terrific will come no matter how dark the present.

-Rabindranath Thakur

In this thesis I investigate, analyse and report the practices and understandings of a secondary school principal in Bangladesh. The principal is exceptional in that, while he deals with the same restrictions that impact education throughout Bangladesh, he finds ways to open and even make doors. The doors he opens lead to places where people may potentially benefit and he motivates and resources them to go there. He is ready to climb over walls when he cannot open or make a door. The principal has become his 'own version of an optimist' in reforming his school. I use Thakur's words not only because they describe the resourcefulness and determination of this principal but also because Thakur is one of Bangladesh's great and inspirational writers who, despite living in a region that was considered as one of the more unprivileged in the world, won a Nobel Prize in 1913 for his literature.

Secondary education in Bangladesh is undergoing rapid change and aims to equip students with skills, competencies and values appropriate to contemporary social needs and to prepare them for future challenges in the global economic market (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2011). But it lacks examples of good practices to improve student learning with focus on academic achievement and also on life skills. This study of a principal who is effectively changing schooling practices on both fronts to improve education for students and community, in a low socio-economic community with limited resources, is timely and necessary. A detail description of the school context is provided in Chapter Two. The focus of this

study is to examine how the principal understands his leadership role in terms of improving student learning and community wellbeing and to explore how he achieves his goals in doing that.

Recent changes in secondary education in Bangladesh show significant progress in factors such as access, enrolment, establishing new schools, gender equity and revision of curriculum (Rahman, Hamzah, Meerah, & Rahman, 2010). Despite these changes and achievements, the quality of learning in schools is still of great concern. In policy documents and reports on education (MOE, 2010; Nahid, 2011), quality is often identified as an important issue but there has been very little substantial discussion of effective ways of improving the quality, nor have there been previous case studies that exemplify leadership practices of principals for the on-going improvement of the quality of learning. It might be argued that there can be no single prescription for quality improvement over the whole country because of the diversity of urban and rural, types of schools and socio-economic factors.

The generalised directives in policy documents have limited impact on what actually happens at school level. So Bangladesh needs evidence-based examples of effective school practices in different specific contexts that can contribute to giving substance to policy. Because there is limited research (as detailed in Chapter Three) about education in Bangladesh, and in particular on the actions and practices at a school level, further study is required to identify the factors needed for future development of secondary schools and the pathways for implementing change successfully. This principal opened his door to me and discussed his initiatives and actions, allowing me to examine actual practices of leadership in a school. His acuity in analysing his work and his ability to reconceptualise his ideas potentially offers rich concepts for the leadership in education and provides the significance of this study.

Context and reality

The context of the education system in Bangladesh and the culture of society are discussed in more detail in Chapter Two. Here I want to highlight six key points to provide orientation of the school and its context.

- i. The role of a principal in Bangladesh is predominantly administrative and managerial. While concerns about how leadership in a school can support student learning has started to become articulated in policy, there are no models of how this might occur in school contexts.
- ii. While society gives a nominally respectful position to teachers, within the school they have little opportunity to use their initiative and they tend to see their task in the classroom just to transmit the knowledge that is available in the government issued textbooks.
- iii. The examination system dominates school education in Bangladesh and memorisation is the key strategy for examination success.
- iv. Classes have large student numbers and students are often silent and their voices are virtually excluded in class.
- v. Parents rate educational success highly as a door to get entry to the competitive job market. However, apart from financially, they get little scope to contribute to their children's schooling. This is particularly true for those who had little opportunity for education themselves.
- vi. Bangladesh tends to be classified as a 'developing' country because of its history of successive colonisations and the fact that many of its families struggle with poverty. However, it is also a country with a long history and with specific culture, values and ideals. Therefore, at the risk of stating the obvious, it is *different* from the contexts described in western books about schooling and educational leadership.

Each of these features is more fully described in Chapter Two.

Local context, international literature

There is some literature about schooling in Bangladesh as is reported in Chapter Three, but it is limited in scope and tends to be focused on problems. As well much of it takes a large-scale quantitative approach, based on surveys and project reports. There is little written about school leadership. In contrast there is much detailed and rich writing in western literature about philosophies and strategies of school leadership and much of the research uses the approach of case studies.

Part of my task has been to navigate between the particulars of the context of the school I have studied and the large body of potentially useful international literature. I have needed to be aware that this literature is itself written within contexts and that most of these contexts differ from that of schooling in Bangladesh; and so, I am very aware that not all, or any, of the concepts in international work may be directly applicable to Bangladesh or that they do indicate an ideal direction for change in our country. However the value of a body of international scholarship is that it provides material for comparison and for strategic selection of relevant ideas for local experimentation.

Case study of Shanjeebon School

This is a case study of a principal, who I name as Nazrul and his school, which is given the pseudonym of Shanjeebon School. Initially I chose the principal when I heard that he was using his students as teachers' assistants in class. When we talked further I became aware of his entrepreneurial approach to managing people and resources that has brought positive outcomes in his school. I wanted to investigate how he made a difference to student learning and to the professional development of his teachers. He was willing to participate in this study so I had the opportunity to investigate his actions, perspectives and understandings. These are the subjects of the chapters that follow.

The primary process for examining his actions and ideas was through an extended sequence of conversations. As I explain in Chapter Four, I call these conversations *professional dialogues*. In these dialogues, we talked extensively about his work as a principal and what our respective understandings of what education is about, what changes are needed for schooling in Bangladesh, how he interprets his role and the initiatives he has taken to change his school to improve student learning and lead to greater wellbeing of the community. These professional dialogues created the basis of the information I collected. This was further enriched by observation, interviews with others and examination of school documents, as is detailed in Chapter Four.

My position in the research

I was interested in exploring Nazrul's innovative approaches to leadership because of my own professional work in teaching leadership courses in a university in Bangladesh. While these courses described operational management practices, they did not involve practical examples from actual school practices. They relied on what I have come to see as an out-dated and relatively weak theoretical base. They were also shaped by authoritarian and top-down approaches to teaching and to administration.

This research promised to allow me to explore an example of successful leadership practices that has broken out of the dominant Bangladeshi mode of school leadership. I hoped to examine how the principal dealt with the challenges of a low socio-economic community and how he motivated the community to come forward to support learning. I anticipated being able to explore ways in which students can become potential partners in the classroom, teachers can be leaders and relationships can be built with the community.

While my reading during my doctoral study gave me access to international models and theories of leadership, Nazrul's practices offered a reflective lens to explore their relevance to Bangladesh. This study of the realities of leadership

practices provided opportunities to develop understandings and working models for examining school leadership in Bangladesh.

Throughout the journey, I considered this study to be a door opening for me to learn from Nazrul about his unconventional practices to improve teaching and learning by engaging teachers, students and parents in implementing his goals. It confronted me with the challenge of navigating the interface between Nazrul's initiatives and practices and the ideas in international literature. It has challenged me to examine and re-examine my ideas about leadership, authority, responsibility and change in secondary schools in Bangladesh. I am aware that educational leadership and change has no end point; it will always be developing in response to changes in society, environment and economies. So I am still in this process.

Language

The school, fieldwork and contextual framework are located in Bangladesh. The language of communication and thinking while working in that country was Bangla, so I have had to translate ideas and experiences into English. Even though the principal could speak English, speaking in *Bangla* allowed us to talk freely and openly in an engaged manner and to get more in-depth data. So most of the dialogues and interviews were conducted in Bangla. Some of the archival material was in English. How I handled translation and ensured reliability is explained in Chapter Four. Translation involved attention not only to vocabulary but also to culture and nuances. Where I have found no easy translation for them, I have retained a few Bangla terms. These Bangla words are explained in the glossary as well as in the text. On the other hand, the research and theoretical literature I read was in English. Here the challenge has been to find what the concepts in terms would mean in a Bangladeshi context and even in the form of English language that is used in Bangladesh. In this way, I have had to work not only between two languages but also between two cultural ways of looking at the world.

Organisation of chapters

The context of this study, as mentioned in the preceding pages, is explained in Chapter Two and the literature review in Chapter Three. Chapter Four summarises the methodological framework of this study. The next four chapters report on the leadership practices of the principal and the changes he initiated in Shanjeebon School. Chapter Five outlines the principal's professional journey and the overall complexities and challenges of leading learning in his school within the social, economic, cultural and political realities of the local community. Chapter Six examines how the principal shares his leadership with teachers and how the teachers are part of the reform process. Chapter Seven outlines the strategies for improving student learning in the classroom and how students are involved in the community for experiential learning. Chapter Eight investigates the principal's ways of engaging parents and community with the school, the challenges encountered, and how the school and community have both benefited through the engagement. Finally, Chapter Nine draws together the various strands of the principal's leadership that have been discussed in the previous chapters, explores the implications of the study and makes recommendations for policy, practice and future research.

Chapter Two

Context of School Leadership

Why a description of the context is important

This research project is situated in my own country, Bangladesh. The university where the candidature is located, the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, is part of the global academic world sharing international discourses of scholarship and engaging with international literature about leadership in education.

Discourses and concerns that operate in schooling in Bangladesh differ from common global concerns. I discuss leadership in the context of my own country and the particular context of the school where I based my research. It is important that the context of my study is understood and to show the differences between the local concerns and global concerns.

In this chapter I explore and report on significant aspects of the Bangladeshi context, drawing on my own life and professional experiences and perceptions and also drawing on policy documents, newspaper articles, historical accounts, and other published reports.

As a student of the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, I had opportunities to enjoy big libraries and lots of books in my field of education. Journals published by the university and relatively dated books in the library fed my interests and knowledge while I studied for Bachelor and Masters degrees. There were research reports on education from national and international organisations that I used. However I did not have access to modern books and journals or to online resources because, at that time, there were no Internet facilities in my university. At that time I could not access any research on school leadership in a Bangladeshi context in any international journals. Though I was thirsty for further knowledge, I had to work with just the resources that were available.

My interest in further learning impelled me to do a second Masters degree at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand, where I conducted research on Bangladeshi secondary school leadership as a part of the degree. The university offered an open door for learning with seemingly unlimited academic resources and other facilities that I required. At that time I was a novice in critically applying international perspectives to the Bangladeshi context. For my current research I have actively sought to read all the articles and research I could find on Bangladeshi schooling, especially in the field of school leadership. I am also conscious about the need to explain the contextual base of school leadership in Bangladesh; because I see it as an insider, I consciously write in my personal voice.

My intention in writing this description of the context is to explain it in such a way that readers can appreciate the particular circumstances of schooling in Bangladesh so better understand what is described in the following chapters. Because there is a lack of researchers in education from Bangladesh, often the context is described by outsiders with limited awareness of Bangladeshi history, culture, constraints and resources, as is the case in many international agency reports. The theoretical ideas developed in international literature are based on findings from other contexts and so may not be applicable to the Bangladeshi context without further interpretive analysis. As a Bangladeshi researcher, I want to describe the Bangladeshi context in a realistic way that will give understanding of a real Bangladeshi school context.

As a single entity, the Shanjeebon School has its own characteristics and might not represent other schools in Bangladesh. The school is located in an urban area that serves people in lower socio-economic circumstances. Until recently most of middle and upper middle class parents who live in that area preferred to send their children to other schools in nearby locations that are recognised as having a reputation for high academic achievement. Only the parents in the slums or those who did not have the means to send their children to schools with such a reputation normally enrolled their children in the school.

Why I am doing my study in such a school? What characteristics of this school attracted me to it? What is the research value of this study? These are significant questions. This school is now gaining interest from many parents because it is now seen to be progressing, to be on its way to broader success so I selected that school as one that is improving. How is this school shaping its own terms of success? What are the characteristics of the principal and the strategies he is using to lead such a school positively? The answers to these questions may be useful to other similar schools in Bangladesh or abroad. I investigated the Shanjeebon School to answer these questions. Without comprehension of the real context of this school and the broader educational context in Bangladesh, the answers might not be fully meaningful.

School change in Bangladesh

To meet the needs of Bangladesh as a newly independent country, a new beginning had to be made so an ambitious educational policy was drafted in 1972 (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2010). The government policies to provide quality education for secondary students became a mandate to be serviced through a national curriculum, textbook boards, examining boards, and schools set up by the government. This national educational system has grown with the expanding population but is in need of revision for further development because secondary education has constantly remained low on the list of government priorities. Failure to change existing systems and provide quality education in the public sector, coupled with other social, economical and political factors that plague many developing countries such as corruption and mismanagement, lack of accountability, low priority given to education in government expenditure and political instability, has led to a mushrooming of secondary schools, still operating in the old ways (Rahman et al., 2010). Any attempt to make the changes needed for school improvement and effectiveness is a vast challenge at the practical level of resourcing secondary schools involving: curriculum reshaping; new textbooks; different examination; changes in teacher education; as well as changes at the highest level of policy-making. Consequently the

strategies for changes that have been attempted at various times have suffered from scarcity of resources, lack of political will and failure to identify with the larger purpose of educational reform.

Lack of proper planning and implementation often cause the changes planned to implement the national education goals to go to astray. A paucity of leadership training and leadership skills leads most principals to run their schools in traditional ways (Salahuddin, 2011). In a highly centralised system of administration, the gap between policy and school level practice is always visible. Principals who do take up the challenge to initiate change need to consider the context of social, economical and even religious factors. This chapter discusses the contextual realities for secondary school leadership in Bangladesh that include policy and structure of education, social and cultural environment, economic realities and political factors.

Policy and structure in education

Bangladesh follows a highly centralised policy of administration and management in education. The structure of administration and schooling is almost the same as was developed during the British period except for changes in the names of school levels (Rahman et al., 2010). The government started to implement a new policy that was issued in 2010. Though structural changes are proposed in the new policy (MOE, 2010), it is still in the pipeline and so far there has been little visible progress. No substantial changes in administration, management and leadership have been proposed in the new policy, although such changes are needed to ensure more accountability about the quality of learning in schools. The new objectives and goals of secondary education might be considered as changes in wording to explain long-standing expectations. If the government is to have a concrete plan to reach its idealistic goals, there is need to further define and clarify the objectives.

Structure

The structures for secondary schooling are in transition. Until now secondary education was organised in a seven year span for students from 11 to 17 years old, divided into three major stages: junior secondary education for grades VI-VIII; secondary education for grades IX-X; and higher secondary education for grades XI-XII (Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics [BANBEIS], 2015a). The new policy proposes a restructuring that assigns grades VI-VIII to the primary sector and makes the secondary sector consist of grades IX to XII over four years. My fieldwork took place in mid-2013 and involved a school that still had grade VI and would just begin to take the senior grade XI-XII students after I left.

There are three major streams in secondary education in Bangladesh: general education taught in the government and non-government schools; technical-vocational education taught in the technical and vocational sections in schools; and madrasah education (Islamic religion based education) taught in madrasah. My study takes place in a general education school.

In terms of administration and finance, there are two types of secondary schools, government and non-government. The government schools are fully run by the government finance and number only 327 in the whole country (BANBEIS, 2015b). The majority of schools (about 98%) are run privately, but receive 100% government financial assistance for salary and wages. In these schools the physical facilities, infrastructure development, educational equipment and teaching aids are supplied by the government. The secondary schools generally provide co-education though a minority offers single sex education for both girls and boys. In addition, there are schools that run education for both girls and boys but separately in different shifts.

The Shanjeebon School is a non-government school for students of both sexes. The school runs two separate shifts, morning and afternoon, one for girls and

one for boys. The boys enter the campus at 12.30pm after the girl students have left school at 12.00pm. So there is no possibility for both boys and girls to study together on campus. This type of school works like two single sex schools with the facilities used by both. Although the concept of single sex schools originated from a religious view of gender separation, especially for girls, other factors such as social, cultural and economical are considerations in such schools. From a rationale of protection of religious sensibilities, these schools can accommodate more students by having the different shifts. However separate shifts require more teachers. Considering the increasing demand for student accommodation, the new policy does propose two shifts in big schools, either for single sex or on any choice made by the school. Single sex or combined schools both operate following the common goals and objectives set in the central education policy.

Aims and objectives in policy

After the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, several commissions were formed for shaping education policy and a draft plan was developed, but none of the successive drafts became law until 2010 (MOE, 2010). It can be argued that the most significant reason for this has been continuous changes in governance of the country. Each new government has tended to put on hold the policy the previous one had developed rather than implementing it. The main two political parties and the Army led government were often too busy to develop a new draft. No government was willing to continue to develop or to implement an earlier draft. When new policies were developed it seems that the focus was on cohesion with party vision rather than on the betterment of education. In many cases, there was little difference between two consecutive drafts but governments would seem to waste energy developing a new draft. So, in Bangladesh, it has taken a long time to get a formal education policy that can function.

Now Bangladesh has the long-awaited education policy; it is in a process of implementation that began in 2010. An important aspect of this policy is that it

emphasises technical education to help people find employment in the context of national and international economics. The stated aims and objectives of secondary education include developing 'latent intellect' and 'comprehensive inner faculties' and developing learners with proper 'competencies' for the job market (MOE, 2010). The policy also focuses on mitigating discrimination among different types of secondary institutions and social-economical groups by designing a uniform curriculum and syllabus. Within a reasonable time, a comprehensive curriculum and syllabus has been developed and implemented for secondary education. The proposed structural change may take longer.

Although broad goals and objectives are written into the policy (MOE, 2010) regarding the development of the future generation for society, further explanation would be helpful for schools to achieve and implement the goals. For example, at this stage there is no specific instruction in the policy of how secondary students could develop their 'latent intellect'. The policy expects to implant social values and attitudes such as honesty, patriotism and accountability in students (MOE, 2010). While knowledge of our national heritage and glorious history could influence students to become patriotic, both the official curriculum and classroom teachers need to be resourced to play their role in instilling those patriotic characteristics in students.

While curriculum content is being developed, there is still much debate about the skills and professionalism of teachers. The policy states that students will be enterprising, creative and capable to lead their respective fields. These characteristics are crucial for national development and for social wellbeing. However, there is clearly a lack of opportunities, in curriculum and school practices, that could enable students to learn and develop entrepreneurship, creativity and leadership. In terms of school administration, the policy proposes regular and effective monitoring of schools (MOE, 2010). Because a shortage of staff within the monitoring system is claimed, it is difficult to see how the policy would ensure regular and effective monitoring without more recruitment.

Administration of education

School administration in Bangladesh is shaped by the top-down tradition of positional leadership (Salahuddin, 2011). The Ministry of Education (MOE) is the policy maker and is the highest echelon of secondary and higher education administration in Bangladesh. Planning, monitoring and evaluation of post-primary education are the main concerns of the Ministry of Education (BANBEIS, 2007). A minister heads the Ministry of Education and executes the policy and planning of education through a secretariat headed by a secretary of the government. The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) supports the Ministry in implementing the policy, rules and regulations at this level. There are nine Zonal and sixty-four District offices for administration and management of secondary education. Each Zonal office is lead by a Deputy Director (DD) and a number of School Inspectors. District Education Officers (DEO) and Assistant District Education Officers (ADEO) perform the administrative and academic supervisory work at district offices. Within each district, Upazila (sub-district) Education Offices for Secondary Education have been established.

Accreditation, examination, curriculum and textbooks, collection of national data and training are operated through different autonomous bodies at the secondary level of education (NAEM & BRAC, 2004). Curriculum and textbooks are developed, published and distributed centrally through the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB). Accreditation and public examinations are controlled by nine education boards, the Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE). There is a Directorate of Inspection and Audit (DIA) to inspect secondary schools, mainly to ensure financial accountability. The training for secondary school teachers, principals, and research are directed by the National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM). The Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) takes responsibility for collection of data in education. In-service or pre-service professional training and programmes are provided through ten Teachers' Training Centres (TTC)

established in different regions and run by the government. All these administrative and management procedures in education are accomplished through a highly centralised system. Schools are considered as the ground level of administration in this top-down system.

Leading secondary schools

In Bangladesh, there are two key leadership positions in every secondary school. The principal has the power to lead the school formally and the assistant principal helps the principal execute the rules and regulations. These two positions hold formal leadership and management roles and are responsible for the development and improvement of the school. Beyond a Bachelor in Education (B.Ed) no professional leadership degree is required to be appointed as a principal of a government or a private school (Salahuddin, 2013). The B.Ed is a one-year teaching degree, which is designed to improve teaching and learning for practising teachers or to provide initial education for becoming teachers. Teaching experience is required varying from three years in government schools to twelve years in non-government schools.

In every school there is an Academic Council (AC) to assist principals in decision-making regarding academic improvement. All teachers in schools are members of the AC, so it is equivalent to staff meetings. Participants in this committee set and implement disciplinary decisions and solve academic issues such as allocating teachers to classes. However, it can be argued that they have very little power so they are seldom encouraged to take on leadership roles. There is a School Managing Committee (SMC) for each secondary school (Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka [BISED], 2011). The SMC represents teachers, community members, parents, educators and the government (ibid). The SMC plays a local executive role in recruiting teachers, setting school fees, establishing advisory positions for various tasks and carrying out the overall supervision of the school.

The principal mainly leads school operations and management. Schools focused on achieving specified goals aim to hire experienced principals. As a result all experienced principals who have shown their leadership strength generally work at schools with good reputations. So other schools have limited opportunity to get principals who are good leaders. Leadership potential is measured in terms of teaching experience so young candidates are seldom appointed as principals. If broader leadership skills were considered principals might be more diversified by age and approach and there would be more opportunities for principals to be creative and success-oriented towards change that might provide effective education. However, there are some principals in new and developing schools who are young, energetic and using their abilities to promote change.

Relationships in schools

The relationship between principals and teachers is positional in secondary schools. A principal typically has an office, which is usually beside the teachers' common room. The principal usually starts the day checking the attendance of teachers. In the case of absence of any teachers, the principal needs to assign other teachers to their classes. The teaching time schedule does not allow teachers to visit the principal's room, unless there is a clear necessity to see her or him. Teachers are seldom motivated to meet with principals except for managerial purposes. In most cases, they talk formally regarding administrative issues. Principals tend to consult only those teachers with whom they are most comfortable. Although there is a formal meeting with all teachers every month or two, administrative and managerial issues are discussed, rather than learning and professional development issues (Thornton, 2006). The large workloads of principals make it difficult for them to build good relationships with teachers. Since there is no other support position in the school administration, except the assistant principal, it is difficult for principals to establish a collegial relationship with all teachers.

Teachers of secondary schools generally sit together in a room beside the principal's room called the teachers' common room. Secondary school teachers are recruited based on broader academic fields such as general science or social science rather than specific subjects such as mathematics or Bangla. Because they share a common room, they have some opportunity to exchange and discuss their ideas and experiences. It is unlikely, however, that they talk to each other about their professional development as that is not customary (Thornton, 2006).

A significant reason for this lack of professional dialogue is time. In most schools, there is a shortage of teachers so teachers have to teach classes additional to their workload. The class duration in secondary schools varies from 35 minutes to 60 minutes and there is a five minutes gap between classes. So teachers are busy and have little time for rest or discussion. A further reason is habit built into the culture: when they get free periods, teachers talk mostly about personal, social and political topics. The current policy defining accountability does not inspire them to develop themselves professionally. There is no promotion for teachers except to become principals. Salary steps remain almost the same from the start to the end of their employment. Fixed salary and prolonged job security often lead to a reduced desire for professional commitment and for evaluating the quality of their teaching.

Teaching and learning in the classroom

The teaching mode in Bangladesh secondary schools is authoritarian and directive. Dialogue between teachers and students, is rare. Teachers are the sole agents in the teaching-learning process and they see their role as the delivery of subject content, and students are passive towards teachers who they see as key to preparing them for the examinations (Alam, 2011). There is little opportunity for students to participate in classroom discussion and teachers value their own voice most. Such a learning process motivates students to learn by rote learning so they can do well in the examination without engaging themselves in personal development. There is competition among students, as well as among different

schools, to achieve high grades because other aspects of school learning, such as co-curricular activities, are not evaluated. The principal and even parents and community members put themselves under pressure to help students achieve good marks in the public examinations. Teachers see their task as the transfer of the content of the curriculum and students try to memorise the content in such a way that they can recall and write it down easily in examinations (UNESCO, 2011).

During the past decade the government has been concerned about the quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools. A major project for changing and assuring the quality of teaching has been implemented, named the Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP). The aim of that project is improvement of the quality of teaching, especially engaging students in classroom learning by participatory methods (MOE, 2014). Definitely there are some reports that positive changes have occurred in secondary school teaching but there are many questions about aspects of quality (Alam, 2015; Podder, 2015; Rasheed, 2015). There is debate about class sizes, use of appropriate teaching aids and allocation of students to classes. The techniques for participatory classroom that teachers learn in their training sessions often cannot be used in class due to the large number of students. A lack of teaching materials prevents the use of teaching aids and continuous teaching without free periods does not allow teachers to build teaching aids themselves. The short length of classes in most schools is also considered as an obstacle to the participatory process. Despite these obstacles, teachers do feel the need to remember that the main goal of a school is to develop students to achieve better grades, which is the most significant criteria for a school's reputation.

How schools gain their reputation

In Bangladesh, the quality and success of schools is measured by student achievement in public examinations. Schools that achieve the most A+ grades in public examinations are considered to be the best schools, by the government.

Parents want to enrol their children in those schools. Quality of learning is measured by grades rather than in terms of social and human values and behaviours learned by students. In an earlier time, the education boards published a merit list of 20 students from each board area, based on student achievement in the public examination and people identified the country's best students from the names on the list. But policy makers wanted to get rid of the ranking system of students and schools so they initiated a grade system for student evaluation. Now there is no merit list, but people count the number of high grades achieved in a school so there is still a question about getting rid of school rankings. Every year the achievement of schools with good reputations makes headline news, and accordingly schools are considered as good or bad by parents, students and society as a whole.

Because results in public examinations are the only standard for the reputation of schools, most principals are directly focused on teaching towards examination success. It does not matter what students learn or how they learn, principals want high and improved grades in public examinations. This one-track thinking often drives their leadership of teachers and students exclusively towards achieving better grades. In many schools teachers' remuneration and school facilities constrain principals who are trying to improve student achievement (Ahmed, Nath, Hossain, & Kalam, 2006), because most principals work in a challenging context of high student-teacher ratios (60:01 or more), poor physical facilities, and a negative economic and socio-political environment (Rahman et al., 2010). Progress towards having a good reputation from examination results is seen as a way to eliminate all these obstacles, because it leads to school income. Whenever schools increase success in public examinations and so build their reputations, it is easier for them to get more students and to increase tuition fees. Once schools gain a good reputation, they gain healthy funding for operating the school. Thus both policy and culture direct schools to teach students for achieving better examination grades rather than considering wider personal and social characteristics.

Evaluation

International literature asserts that schools can be places where young people come together and develop their values and social behaviour, and that they can spark students' imaginations and tap into their natural enthusiasm and so lead them on to desire to change the world around them (Robinson, Hohepa, Lloyd, & New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2009). However, creative outlets for students do not exist in the vast majority of Bangladeshi schools (Ahmed, Ahmed, Khan, & Ahmed, 2007). The curriculum fails to motivate students' imagination or interest. Neither textbooks nor teachers give much attention to the pressing social and economical issues that Bangladesh faces. Because of the separation between students' daily life and their formal classroom learning, which values test-taking and memorisation skill at the cost of critical thinking and creativity, a sense of confusion and apathy is pervasive in the country (UNESCO, 2011).

To evaluate students there are at least two term examinations for each grade in secondary schools. In the examinations, two different types of questions are included: multiple-choice and open-ended. To answer the open-ended question, students mainly depend on the content of their textbooks, which gives little opportunity for creativity. Because of this system, not only students but also teachers and parents are dependent on the textbooks. Due to the traditional pattern of questions, teachers prepare dummy answers before the examinations and supply them to students. Private tutoring is widespread for this reason. To get rid of rote learning and private tutoring the government decided to introduce what is termed the 'creative question' to evaluate skills other than memorisation. This 'creative question' was first introduced into the SSC examinations in 2010. No samples of the creative questions are contained in the textbooks but students who have thoroughly studied the textbooks should be able to answer these questions. This approach seems good for quality learning but has been questioned, because there are notebooks and guides are now available in the market to help students prepare for the creative questions. In many cases,

teachers, students and parents use the guidebooks as a vehicle to achieve better marks easily. In the absence of sufficient training for teachers, especially in how to teach thinking skills, the implementation of creative questions is currently creating confusion in both teachers and students.

Classroom punishment

In a teacher-centred method, preparing students for examinations and the achievement of good grades is the teachers' responsibility. After delivering the content teachers are supposed to ensure that students can recall it, and if they fail teachers often resort to punishment. The nature of punishment varies from verbal to physical. Physical punishment includes: hitting students on the hand or leg with canes, pieces of chalk or dusters; pressing fingers after putting a pen or a pencil between them; cutting hair; pulling ears; slamming, shoving, compelling students to kneel down or assume a squatting position; compelling students to repeatedly sit and stand or to stand on one leg; putting a student on or under a piece of furniture; compelling students to stand holding their ears; and putting students under direct sunlight (Podder, 2011).

Physical punishment hurts students' bodies and verbal punishment damages them psychologically (Podder, 2011). Verbal punishment includes: calling students by names of an animal or an object; distorting their names; criticising students' physique, complexion, religion, caste or clan; referring negatively to their parents or family activities. Teachers also give punishment when they think students break the rules of schools, or even of society (ibid).

Punishment does not help student learning. Podder (2011) argues, "Any kind of punishment, physical or mental, contributes to unlearn what learners have already learnt". Although many teachers have attended professional courses and pedagogical training, they have become accustomed to using punishment because there is a tradition of doing so. They would seldom think about the negative impacts of such punishment on student development. In the current

context the use of punishment has become a crucial issue for quality education in Bangladesh. In 2011, the Ministry of Education circulated a rule to stop corporal punishment. Although it seems that physical punishment has stopped, little change is visible in terms of verbal punishment. My personal experience is that many teachers and parents believe in punishment as a means to better learning. The background experiences of teachers, social culture and lack of behaviour management skills are reasons for such beliefs.

Recruiting teachers

Teachers are recruited for a secondary school by a selection board, comprising the principal, SMC and the education board authority. In a traditional way of recruitment, a circular is published in daily newspapers for specific positions, mentioning required experience and qualifications. People who fulfil the criteria apply for the position and face the selection board for written and oral tests. The number and quality of candidates for a position depends on the location of school, its reputation and the salary range. Although all schools are government funded, some pay an extra amount to teachers from the school fund, depending upon school income. As a result, there are significant differences in the calibre and salaries of teaching staff of schools.

In general, teachers in urban schools are considered better than those in rural schools because they often come with better academic backgrounds. There is lively debate in Bangladesh about who comes into the teaching profession. Are they interested in teaching or do they just consider it as a source of income? Sometimes, those who have not found another job easily come into teaching. Sometimes questions are asked about manipulation of selection processes. Often less qualified candidates are recruited by unfair means, such as money, power or relationships.

To ensure quality, the government of Bangladesh introduced the teacher registration and accreditation system in 2007. In this new system, the Non-

government Teachers Registration and Certification Agency (NTRCA), an autonomous body, accredits and registers those who have passed a competitive examination (UNESCO, 2007). This system serves as a requirement to recruit teachers in government aided non-public schools where previously teachers were recruited by the selection Board comprised of principal, SMC and education board authority, without candidates having to attain any national examination (MOE, 2013a). This new system sets at least a baseline for further recruitment in secondary schools. Although this reform was implemented within the framework of the TQI-SEP project, now NTCRA works as a full autonomous body. While the minimum standard for recruiting secondary teachers is set, finding the best candidates is often complicated. The use of power and unfair means stop the best candidates in getting the jobs in many schools (Haq, 2015). The situation gets worse where SMC and principal are not focussed on school goals. Then training for quality development in secondary schools does not work effectively.

Training for teachers and principals

School performance is likely to be affected by school resources and effectiveness of teachers, which depends in turn on teacher education and training. To enhance and ensure the quality of education in secondary schools, a large-scale project, the TQI-SEP project, was started in 2006 by the government of Bangladesh. Among the four major goals of the project, enriching teaching quality was the priority. All existing secondary school teachers have been given training in their respective subjects in the first phase of the project in 2006-2011 (MOE, 2014), the second phase is in progress and aims to increase teaching skills. Breaking the isolation of traditional teacher-centred teaching and learning and introducing a participatory approach are the main goals of this training. Though all the teachers have undergone training now, the implementation of the changed approach depends on the professional responsibility of teachers and availability of resources in the school.

Bangladesh secondary schools have traditionally used teacher-centred approaches; they mostly use a lecture method. The negative side of this method is that the teachers deliver the content to the students and students seldom have opportunity to satisfy their curiosity by questioning the teachers (Riad, 2011). Teaching is then one-sided, a 'jug-mug' approach where the teacher pours knowledge into the students. Teachers consider themselves agents of knowledge where students receive what they deliver. Now the intention is that this joyless, autocratic teaching is to be replaced by a participatory method. In this process, teachers and students should participate collaboratively in classrooms. Teachers should make their lessons worthwhile, as students become active participants in the class.

To develop school leadership and improve the quality of the teaching-learning environment in schools, a short training programme has been developed and delivered to secondary school principals (TQI-SEP, 2012). The duration of this training is 35 days, where the principals learn theoretical concepts about school leadership, management and administration. The content is mainly about administrative and managerial processes rather than leadership for learning. However, this training can be considered a good step forward because there was previously no leadership training for secondary school principals.

Education policy is made at central level and has little connection to the ground root level of schools. Even in curriculum and textbook writing, teachers rarely get opportunities to contribute (UNESCO, 2011) except for a few teachers from reputable schools in Dhaka city. As a result, a big gap exists between education policy and what happens in real school contexts. Principals and teachers often find policy impossible to implement and they also need to consider the social and cultural contexts in which their schools are operating in deciding how to implement new policy.

Social and cultural context

After independence in 1971, the journey of secondary education as a social responsibility began in Bangladesh. The country inherited a literacy rate of 17.61% on its liberation and the government placed importance on improving the literacy rate by offering free primary education. At that time secondary schooling was not a government focus. Communities had a big role in establishing, administering and operating secondary schooling from the beginning. When the government promised free primary education for all, thoughtful people tried to continue schooling further in their communities. As a result, most secondary schools were established using local donations, especially contributions from people who had land or money as well as an interest in education. In most cases, the government took the responsibility to provide a partial salary for school staff and some physical facilities. Wage subsidisation began at 40% and reached to 100% at the beginning of the twenty-first century (Rahman et al., 2010). After achieving what can be seen as a remarkable success in primary education enrolment, the government started to increase the facilities in secondary education. Although the government is paying 100% salary at present, secondary schools still run on strong social involvement of their communities.

Historical context

All secondary schools in Bangladesh, except government and Armed forces schools, started from initiatives of local people. In most cases educated and wealthy people are the initiators but not always. Sometimes educated people who do not have wealth but have courage and social vision take responsibility to establish a school. For this reason, many schools are named after notable people. In such naming, power and wealth are often considered, and specific persons or families are given authoritative involvement in the school. This involvement can be beneficial for secondary school management because it helps schools operate smoothly and helps resolve school-society tensions. Realising these

benefits, the government has always encouraged public involvement in secondary schools.

The stories of the establishment of most secondary schools are interesting and positive. Because schools do not receive funding from the government at the initial stage, they normally start with limited funds and resources. In many cases schools begin with poor physical facilities and inadequate human resources. Teachers and other staff receive small salaries or none at all until they get a certain number of students or government subsidies. Getting students in new schools always takes time, as parents do not easily trust such schools. Most parents consider new schools a risk for their children. Parents often worry about teaching staff, facilities and the quality of new schools. It takes a significant time, years in fact, to show parents convincing outcomes from new schools. Schools can seldom fulfil the requirements to get the government's subsidy at the initial stage. So teachers and staff need to sacrifice their labour, time and money. With time, many schools do reach a good position in terms of economy, number of students and reputation. However, the beginning of most secondary schools is full of sacrifice, dedication, crises and challenges.

The Shanjeebon School has such a story. A rich man, considered the initiator, realised the necessity of education for the community and donated a piece of land for establishing a school. He was born into a family considered to have of wealth and power in the region. Historically, his forefathers were the landlords in that territory and the school is named after his elder brother. When this socially influential man invited others to talk about starting a school, he got encouraging responses. A group of people were dedicated to working to establish the school. Some agreed to teach for free until the school started to earn, either from students or from the government. Although the school received land and a few donations, there was a scarcity of money to pay staff salaries. The school could not ask students for tuition fees until it reached a stable position in terms of achievement and reputation. As a result, the initial few years were quite challenging for the organisers, especially for teachers. They faced challenges

getting students to enrol, proving the quality of teaching and reaching a better position in the perceptions of the community. They reached a point of survival in a few years but ensuring quality education remained a challenge.

Workforce and reputation

The reputations of new schools are based on the initial leadership and teaching staff. Some schools may begin in full swing if the principal and teachers are reputable persons. There are examples where principals were appointed to new schools when they retired from renowned schools. The new schools inherited the reputations and quickly gained similar reputations. These renowned principals also hired skilled teachers who could promote quality education. But starting like this requires money, although money usually comes back within a short time. Because parents can rely on such a school from the beginning, they are happy to pay the required tuition fees. However, such secondary schools are the exception in Bangladesh.

The Shanjeebon School did not begin with a reputable principal and teaching staff. The first principal and teachers began with donated land to build on and minimum physical facilities, and getting students was a challenge. They had to go from door-to-door to motivate parents to send their children to the new school. The parents, who were educated and aware, were not convinced to send their children to the new school. Often other parents, who were not literate, were not interested in sending their children to school at all. So teachers had to work without salaries for the first few years since they had few students. They could not even ask for tuition fees from those students. It can be assumed that they started to get students after running the school for a time.

The stories of the initial stage are linked to learning in schools where principals, teachers and society need to play important roles. Due to a gap in the administrative monitoring from government and school authority, principals must be responsible for total school management. Often the credit for good

teaching in secondary schools is attributed the principals. In leading schools, every principal needs to follow and maintain the central prescription for secondary education. The principal works as the academic and managerial head to achieve the school goals (Abdullah, Huq, & Ismail, 2008). Without an effective engagement of teachers and SMC, principals seldom lead schools to success. When there are formal ways of engaging community people to SMC, principals can involve them in schools to contribute in many other ways. So the successful running and reputation of schools depend on principals working cohesively with community people.

Role of society

People in communities contribute in different ways to running secondary schools. Some, who are engaged in the establishment phase, work to motivate others to send their children to school. They often put their efforts into collecting donations for new schools. Sometimes people make small contributions, according to their capacity, towards providing physical facilities. Those who are aware of the value of education help to make parents aware of its value. When secondary schools get government registration and are entitled to receive subsidies, some participate in school administration by joining the SMC. All these factors show how important the community contribution is for secondary schools.

Children's learning: Whose responsibility?

While community contributions play an important role in establishing schools, there is a strong debate about who is responsible for children's learning. Some believe that providing quality education is the clear duty of the school. They think their only responsibility is to send children to school, and the school will complete further requirements. If parents are not aware of how to support their children's learning at home, how can schools develop students as the kind of learners that the national policy expects? Students have only limited hours in

school, so how can teachers guide them for the rest of the time? Students normally spend three quarters of their time at home with parents. It seems logical that parents need to play a role in their children's learning at home if they are to develop as good people as well as to be academically successful.

The nature of parents' beliefs about children's learning often depends on their education and knowledge. Their beliefs are influenced by social culture. If parents are illiterate, most believe they cannot help in their children's learning. Because they cannot read and write, how they can help their children? As a result, they do not ask their children about their learning. Some educated parents also follow a similar pattern of non-intervention. Perhaps they did not receive home support when they were students, so as parents they do not try to understand their children's learning. Some parents, aware of the value of education, provide private tutors for their children without personally getting involved. They think they are doing their best for their children's learning. Presently, parents who have money arrange private tutors at home or send children to coaching classes. As a result, the lack of parents' engagement in children's learning at home is fuelling the coaching business in the country.

Coaching: substitute way of learning

The coaching business has mushroomed in Bangladesh since the mid-1980s (Hamid, Sussex, & Khan, 2009) because teachers want to earn money in addition to their salaries. Among many causes for the coaching business, low salary for teachers is one of significant reasons. This is a harsh reality that governments have failed to address over a long time. There are two types of coaching, by attendance at coaching centres and joining a private batch. Coaching centres are places where students get extra tuition by paying fees. They are operated by either teachers or senior level students, especially those who are considered better students in that region. Most teachers are engaged in private coaching. Teachers make 'batches' to coach privately. The number of students in each batch varies according to the teachers' reputations, fees and the courses. A batch

may include five to 30 students. Teachers normally allot time for coaching before or after their teaching in school. Formerly school grounds were used for private batches. Now the government has banned private batches and teachers are not allowed to use school grounds.

Parents who have the financial means and who aspire to better learning provide private tutors at home. These tutors could be teachers or students. Sometimes parents, who desire the highest results for their children in public examinations, spend huge amounts of money to provide renowned teachers privately for each course their children take. It is the highest single private expenditure in secondary education at present (Ahmad, 2007). These private tutors' duty is focused on student learning to attain the best results in the examinations. They write notes for potential questions in the examinations and students memorise them so that they can write the exact words. In many cases students do not try to understand the notes. Thus, even students who get best grades may not have much knowledge of a specific course.

Students whose families cannot afford money for private tuition at home or to join a batch go to a coaching centre. These centres supply prepared notes for examinations. They try to keep their material updated. Because all centres are not able to provide the best materials, some well-reputed centres demand high fees from parents. Although most students attend coaching, their choice of which centre to attend is based on their interests, financial ability and the centres' reputation.

A government ruling against the coaching business came in the wake of the widening spread of coaching centres. Following a new guideline titled "Policy-2012 to stop teachers from doing coaching business in educational institutions", teachers can now only provide tuition at their own residence to a maximum of 10 students from schools other than the one they are employed, after receiving prior permission from the respective heads of their own schools ("Curbs on

Coaching”, 2012). In addition, teachers can take extra classes for weaker students at their own schools in exchange for a fee fixed by the government.

It seems that coaching and private tuition has become a parallel learning system throughout the country. All private tutors and coaching centres are focused on improving student outcomes in examinations. Although private coaching within schools has been banned, formal coaching with fixed fees is still allowed for students who need assistance. Apparently the former private tuition business has transformed into a formal business. In any case, coaching centres continue throughout the country and the government has not taken any observable action, except to make a law about it.

How this culture of coaching began and the extent to which it has spread and become so widely used in the community might help to clarify the basis of the problem. The quality of teaching and lack of professional responsibility by teachers are often blamed. Perhaps the process of establishing secondary schools by community members allows the employment of teachers with minimum qualifications. Once teachers are employed with even minimum educational qualification, by law the government has to continue the employment. As a result, there is a strong probability of unskilled candidates being allowed into secondary school teaching. Then there is the issue of who normally gets involved in teaching during the establishment of new schools. Often it is people who have not found any other job and it is perhaps unreasonable to expect quality teaching from them. If the government had adequate means to provide professional development, these teachers could be up-skilled but current provisions are still inadequate for the task. These factors encourage parents to go to a parallel learning system outside schools.

Social customs and schooling

Social customs are important for learning for each generation and schools can play a significant role in transmitting these social norms. School leaders should

consider these norms in preparing students for life. They also must be conscious of these norms when they make operational decisions. What are the significant social norms in Bangladeshi communities? Why it is important to understand the norms when running schools? How are schools responsible for instilling those norms in students? Discussing some of important norms and values will help in understanding their importance in schooling.

Social bonding

People in Bangladesh enjoy social bonding. Those who live in communities normally know each other. They share their feelings, humour, sorrow and happiness. Most families talk to their neighbours every day and offer help when needed. Sometimes they share their food. While this custom is strong in rural areas, it is losing strength in urban society and there is an expectation that schools will teach these customs so that future generations can continue to value community bonding. Although most of the specific customs are included in parts of the curriculum, actual learning depends on the culture and practices in schools. The education management authority has little scope to ensure practices of those customs in schools. For instance, an administrator cannot monitor how schools share food in programmes or during *tiffin* (snacks) period. If teachers are willing, they could encourage students to share their food and establish that in the school culture. So teaching social culture depends more on practices than on including them in curriculum.

Respect seniors and love juniors

Paying respect to seniors, those who are older in school or society, is considered a fundamental social custom in Bangladeshi society. Respect needs to be shown everywhere, in families, in institutions, in society and in any programme. There are cultural and religious ways to pay respect. For example, conveying Salam or *Adab* to seniors is expected in a Muslim family. Salam belongs to Muslims and *Adab* represents a traditional cultural way to greet elders for people in other

religions. Family members, especially parents, try to teach their children to show respect. When children go to school, they are expected to learn this custom there too. In every school, paying respect to seniors is considered a rule to be learned and practised. Students might even face punishment if they do not do it properly. There is debate about whether the respect comes from heart or is just a process of following rules; schools can play an important role in teaching students why they should respect seniors.

Loving juniors, those who are younger, is also expected in school, families and society. People expect that seniors should love and care for juniors in their community in accordance with traditional culture. It is normal that seniors are allowed to cuddle children and to offer food. Nobody needs to think about getting permission, because it is normal practice. People consciously observe when youngsters step out to do something bad to society and often take action. Sometimes respected people in a community give advice to the younger generation for the wellbeing of society. Parents expect that elder children will take care and love their younger siblings. So learning to care for younger students in school is expected.

Teachers are icons in a community

Teachers are considered to be models of the norms, ethics and values in Bangladeshi society. People idealistically think of teachers as community models who not only teach their children but also work for social harmony and improvement. That is why people show them respect everywhere, in school, the street or at a tea stall. When a social issue or conflict is raised, people often go to teachers for advice and solutions. Often family crises will be discussed with teachers, in the hope of receiving suggestions to deal with them. In Bangladesh a popular community court, named *shalishee*, is well recognised. Renowned teachers used to be members of the *shalishee* boards. As a son of a secondary school teacher, I experienced my father's involvement in the *shalishee* for a long time during my school life. Social issues are normally resolved there,

and people are bound to obey the decisions. This example highlights the honour and status of a teacher in the community. People respect and honour teachers, and give them top status. Teachers might not have enough money, but they have honour, respect and dignity in Bangladeshi communities.

Parents expect that their children will learn norms and values from teachers. As well as parents, many other people in a community look to teachers as examples of how to organise and to develop their life. Students follow teachers in learning norms, values and ethics. Students find heroes among their teachers. In most cases students believe in what teachers say, even more than in their parents, especially in matters to do with learning. So teachers need to be aware that in talking, communicating and how they conduct themselves, they are influencing followers. But is it possible for teachers to lead such ideal lives in the Bangladeshi context? When there is a significant debate about their salary structure, are all teachers able to live an ideal life? Is there any gap in between social expectation and teachers' life styles? Answering all these questions might not be possible in this research; but they underlie contemporary schooling and so may provoke future research by others.

Celebrate national and cultural festivals

Celebrating national and international days is part of school culture. There are instructions from policy level to observe important national days. The extent of arrangements and the number of programmes depends on the leadership of schools and on their financial capacity. In general, most programmes are arranged by collecting fees from students. During my student life, I was involved with many celebrations (such as International Mother Language Day, Victory Day) that were arranged by collecting a small donation from students. Students and teachers both encouraged and enjoyed the programmes. For such programmes, some volunteer student leaders were needed who could communicate with teachers and rest of students to organise the programmes. There are also some schools that arrange those programmes from a school fund.

Only a few schools have such financial capacity and strong leadership. A third type of school arranges the celebrations differently. The motivation for these schools is their leadership and dedication to the country. They arrange programmes by involving students in the organisation and manage the budget either from the school fund or from student donations.

Regardless of size or of organisational arrangements, festivals serve as vehicles for learning and transmitting history, culture, customs and national pride to future generations. Without doubt these celebrations are important in developing students as rounded members of society. The schools that have more of these co-curricular activities are able to facilitate their students social learning better but because of financial resources there are significant differences in schools being able to arrange celebrations. If there is no budget for these celebrations, how can schools authorities arrange programmes? Principals play important roles in organising these programmes and they need to be strategic in terms of financial management.

Because many parents expect their children to learn national history and culture at school, resourceful principals try to arrange programmes that provide that. Even some programmes that are not mandated by government are celebrated in those schools, such as Mothers Day and Cake Festival. Sometimes, a programme might impact on the community positively and help parents to be positive towards a school. For example, if a community experiences a sudden flood, their normal life is disrupted and they require help. In that situation if the school children extend themselves to do community service, it creates a positive rapport between students and community members. Students learn what they should do for their community after a disaster and the community people become confident of the welfare of their children in that school. These programmes do not depend on government instruction; it is up to creative leaders to involve their students in their community in critical situations.

People are religious not society

Bangladesh is considered to be a secular country with peace and harmony. Despite a majority of Muslims, people of various religions are living together and in peace throughout the country. In many parts of the country groups of people from different religions live next to each other but are not involved in fighting. They follow their own religious views and rituals. These groups honour each other's religious cultures and teach their children to behave in the same way. For example, Ramadan and Durga Puja are the significant rituals for Muslims and Hindus respectively. Because both these festivals depend on the moon calendar they may come at the same time, which happened in 2013. But there were no news of fighting between Muslim and Hindu anywhere in the country. Education plays an important role in learning about and honouring religions and in keeping harmony in society.

How harmony will be retained in Bangladesh, as global unrest in the name of religious conflict impacts on national and international shapers of policy, is a vital question. From my own life experience, I never felt any power relation towards my friends from other religions at school or in the community. I believe the learning from my family and school developed me in that way. If there is discrimination in the culture and practices in schools or families, then children might develop in other ways. Nowadays children often see the clash between religions due to growing access to 'Sky' channels in Bangladesh so schools need to take a stronger responsibility for their students to understand these incidents.

Religion plays an important role in school practices. The culture of an institute might be influenced by several religions or a specific group, such as Madrasha or the Baptist Mission School, might be dominated by a specific religion. The traditional Bangladeshi culture is founded on four religions: Islam, Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism since they have dominated at respective times in the history of the country. With the biggest proportion of followers, Islam has the greater impact on school customs, such as dress codes that can also be

considered as cultural. In many cases the dress code depends on the context, current practices and traditional beliefs of community people. For instance, a school situated in a Muslim dominated area might need to consider their custom for school dress, especially for girls. For example, in those more traditional communities, people may choose *borka* (a long and loose garment covering the whole body from head to feet that is worn in public by Muslim girls in many countries) over the school dress. Over time school authorities might consider changing the dress. Such change would be considered a religious issue. Changing the dress is not impossible, but the principal needs to be strategic in making that decision.

It seems that social and religious cultures have greater impact on schooling in Bangladesh than in the international schooling literature I have read. Providing facilities for teachers and students to celebrate aspects of different cultures enhances the nurturing of those cultures. Although finance is not the only issue for providing facilities for students to practice social customs in schools, leaders do need to consider their school funds in making decisions.

Economy and schooling

Bangladesh is known as an agriculture-based country. While the largest part of the Gross Domestic Product does come from agriculture (Mondal, 2010), the main way of earning foreign currency is now the garment industry. Most of the population of this country is engaged in these two sectors. While there are similarities between the two groups of workers, such as illiteracy and low income, there are significant differences in term of their life styles. Most farmers live in rural areas and garment workers are mainly located in urban areas. Rural people have little opportunity to find other work. That is also true for educated people in rural areas. Most professions are located in urban areas. This reality makes a significant difference in educational opportunity and quality between urban and rural areas. However it does not mean that all institutes in urban areas provide quality education. Facilities in schools and quality of teaching

depend on school location, parental financial conditions, job opportunities, and the ways these factors shape the school environment.

Social economy, parents and schooling

The Shanjeebon School is located in an urban area, not far from the central city. While the term urban might suggest a moderately high standard of living, the communities that provide students for Shanjeebon School represent a low income population. Because explained earlier, entry of students into a particular school largely depends on parental financial capacity. As it draws on a low social income population, Shanjeebon School can charge only minimum costs for education.

Parental social status and income has significant impact on the learning environment in a school (Ahmad, 2007). When most students come from economically solvent families who are ready to pay any required school fees, providing facilities becomes easier for the school administration. Getting extra learning facilities supports students in achieving better results. Through the admission test, highly-ranked schools can expect their students to have strong support and appropriate facilities at home. Shanjeebon School has neither an admission test nor high social class students. The school cannot be considered as having a high reputation yet. So a significant reason in studying this school is its innovative leadership in engaging students, parents and community in learning and focused in developing examination results as well as well-rounded people. The school has more than 3000 students. Although some students are from middle-income families, many do not have the capacity to pay the minimum tuition fees. Most students are from families with parents who did not want to send their children to school. These parents often need to have their children earn money for their families to survive. Even strong logic does not always convince them that schooling is better than short-term earning. In such situations, encouraging parents to send their children to school and engaging

students in learning is big challenge for the school. Studying the leadership of such a school is, without question, significant.

Income opportunity of parents

My personal experience and observation is that most parents in highly ranked schools are engaged in recognised professions and earn high incomes; those in other schools are not so homogenous with parents coming from all income levels. Often the location of a school is indicative of the kinds of families that live there. If most parents are day labourers, especially shopkeepers, garment workers, housemaids and other poorly paid occupations, then the environment and culture in the school can become challenging due to the lower socio-economic background of the students. These students often lack learning facilities at home. In many cases, parents want their children to work for an income. The students might need to be away from school at times. These factors also put schools in a challenging position in acquiring learning materials.

Most parents in Shanjeebon School come from a lower social income level. Although middle and higher income people live in the school area, they prefer to send their children to other schools for what they see as a better education. Two types of parents are significant in this school. First, some parents work in garment factories. Most of these parents are illiterate and live a vulnerable life in term of continuing employment and income. In many garment factories there are no job contracts and people may lose their jobs at any time. The job offers very poor salaries, so families find it hard to survive. For survival, they often need to work more than eight hours a day. After working long hours, parents have little to offer their children in terms of support for learning. In many families both parents are working for survival of the family. When both parents work they do gain more income, but they cannot offer assistance to their children. Consequently children from these families lack opportunities for learning at home.

The second group of parents in this school are day labourers. These parents are involved in small business or are employed on a day-to-day basis. The small businesses mainly include street stalls (food or produce). These parents often want their children to work with them. If children work rather than go to school, the family can earn more money. Some of these parents are not aware of the value of education and so do not send their children to school. Others are aware, but do not want to send their children to school, because they need the income. Some parents work as shopkeepers in small shops but earn small incomes. They find it hard to send their children to school and they often need to involve their children in their work.

The situation of parents in Shanjeebon School reaches the worst level when they work on a day-to-day basis. These parents often struggle to survive because they have uncertain income sources. They even do not know how much they will earn that day when the sun is rising. They wait to grab a job in the morning in a specific place and if someone hires them then they can earn money to buy food and other necessities. When parents fight just for survival, how they can think of their children's education? Sometimes they are aware of the value of education and try to send their children to school, which adds to their stress.

Living conditions and learning

In the Bangladesh education system, home plays an important role in student learning. In most schools, students get assignments to complete at home. Dedicated teachers try to let students understand basic concepts in class and assign further work to be completed at home. The large class numbers does not allow the completion of the syllabus just in class time (Ahmed et al., 2006). Some teachers, who lack teaching skills or are not dedicated to teaching, use class time for their lecture only and leave students with home assignments to cover the content in the textbook. Students need to spend a reasonable time at home for their assigned work. In completing assignments, students often need help from

their parents or from an educated person. Thus, family living conditions, environment and home facilities can influence students' motivation to learn.

Urban life in Bangladesh reflects unequal living standards. There are also significant differences between urban and rural areas; but because the school I have studied is in an urban area, I am focusing on urban living. Urban life is marked by inequalities (Cameron, 2010). People with high incomes live in big flats or houses with all modern facilities and often have a lavish life style. Those who are becoming known as the middle class live in modest flats where they have basic necessary facilities and a modest life style. Those a little less well off live in small flats and sometimes they share flats with their wider family. They often need to share kitchens and toilets. The poor people normally live in slums, where they lack facilities to meet their basic needs.

Where families share small spaces or live in slums, the children often do not get access to school or if they do go to school often experience challenging learning environments at home. When all members in a family live in one room, how can students do their assignments at home? They do not have the physical environment or academic assistance from their parents. If they do not understand the basics of the subject content, how can they solve problems or complete their assignments? So, they often experience punishment at school. In families where both parents are busy at work for the whole day, parents often like to watch television for relaxation. This destroys space for children's study. Where Sky channels are almost free and people do not have much to enjoy in their life, television becomes more normal than catering for children's study. Bangladesh is characterised by a joint family culture and people often like to spend nights with their relatives. If the members of the wider family come and stay over, parents and children need to sacrifice their usual bed to them. So how they can think about their learning when even sleeping is a challenge?

In slums, people have a low standard of life. Normally these people are illiterate and have come to urban areas for a better income. The slums in urban areas lack

many opportunities that rural slum people get, such as enough space to live. United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] (2010) reports that slums in urban areas lack even the most basic facilities of urban life such as safe water, toilets and electricity. Because of their lack of educational background and the practicalities of their lives, most slum parents are not interested in sending their children to school. These slum children are considered to be a main obstacle to the government's achievement to meet its millennium goal. When schools are in areas where many people live in slum conditions, motivating parents to send their children to school is inevitably a huge challenge for the school leaders and for the community. In the area where this study took place, most students are from slums.

To get children from the slums into school, principals need to develop a plan for motivating parents. To motivate slum parents, positive relationships and good communication with parents currently in the school can be effective because these parents may talk to their neighbours and encourage them to send their children to school. Sometimes schools need to think differently about tuition fees for these children. When a family does not have money to buy their rice, of course they will not think of their children's education. So if the school can carry the tuition fees, it means the students can get admission and schooling is free, and then parents may be encouraged to participate in schooling. While motivating parents with words is a matter of communication skills of principals, providing free education is not an easy decision for principals and schools. The leaders in the school I studied have needed to be innovative to break the usual ways of traditional budgeting to do something for these students.

When trying to solve problems such as getting children from the slums to attend schools, principals still need to be aware of the wider social practices. Like other societies, there are politics in various community and national contexts in Bangladesh. Though schools are not part of party politics, the school leaders often need to maintain communication with power holders for successful school

development. In addition, national politics has indirect effects on schooling in Bangladesh.

Political context and schooling

Secondary schools have no formal connection to politics and teachers do not have the right to practise politics in school. In general, secondary schools are considered as social institutions run by teachers and community people. Although government does control the making of central policy for these schools, their operational management is supposed to be carried out by the local authority through the SMC. The structure of formal involvement of community people in schools has changed little over time or with political shifts. Although there have been no big shifts, a shadow of national politics has entered into school management during this decade. Teachers in some schools are even involved in party politics and while they may not bring their political views openly into the school their involvement in a party does have some impact. SMC members also have political affiliations and these can impact on school development.

SMC and politics

According to the current structure, the local Members of Parliament (MP) or his/her nominees are the chairpersons of the SMCs. Though the role of MP is to be a representative of the public he or she is a politician as well. If the chairperson is interested in school development, he or she can work positively towards school improvement and not create any political issues. Schools only experience problems when the chairperson is focused on self-interest, such as money making, or recruiting family members into the school. The chairperson often tries to select members for the SMC like donors who are involved in the same political party or who support favour his or her own goals and work. If these members work as a team in opposition to the best interests of school development, the principal and teachers cannot run the school effectively.

Although the SMC is formed to take care of local school administration and management and to report these to the level of policy, they often become engaged in academic concerns, such as requests for permission by failing students to sit for public exams. It is very difficult to draw a clear line in between academic and managerial concerns in a school. For example, recruiting teachers is considered to be a managerial issue, but teachers do academic work. So if a SMC member uses his or her power in recruitment, this has direct impact on learning. In contrast, if the SMC members are eager to develop the schools and recruit best candidates as teachers, this enhances student learning.

Because the SMCs are responsible for making school policy and taking administrative decisions for school development, they hold the power to run the schools in a way that can lead to success. If the principals, teachers and SMC members work as a team, the schools find ways to overcome challenges. The importance of the role played by SMC has been shown in schools that are successful in Bangladesh. The most significant factors for successful schools have been identified as the leadership of the principal and the administrative support from the SMC (NAEM & BRAC, 2004). Without co-operation and good relationships, leading schools towards their goals would be impossible for principals and teachers. However, even if there is good relationship between principals and the SMCs but they are not focused on developing schools, then it is unlikely that schools will improve. Unexpected interference by the SMCs in academic decisions often leads schools in negative directions (NAEM & BRAC, 2004). For instance, additional book selection is an important job that needs to be done by teachers. If SMC members interfere in selection for their own monetary interest, it may result in the purchase of low quality books, since these selections are beyond their expertise.

Often newspapers carry stories about school management issues (Haq, 2015), sometimes when there are clashes between the principal and the chairman in a school. It is acknowledged that negative news is published broadly but the reality in secondary schools cannot be overlooked. The issues often written

about include abuse of power and unfair means of recruiting teachers and staff and misuse of school budgets for personal projects (Haq, 2015). Whether this news is correct or unfounded, the publicity has a negative impact on student learning and school development. s

The relationship of such abuse of politics poses significant problem.

Relationships between politicians and their influence on recruitment processes have been proved. As members of the SMCs politicians often try to favour their supporters and relatives. Helping people to be recruited as teachers provides a good income source as they pay for the favour. Sometimes this practice even goes beyond personal relationships. Because the number of educated people always exceeds the number of jobs, there are people who try to get a position at any cost. So, these educated young people make deals with those in power to get jobs. In such cases, the person who is recruited, despite an academic degree, might not be the best candidate. As a result, the school gets weak candidates for teaching positions, which in turn negatively influences the quality of teaching (Haq, 2015).

National politics and schooling

There is no direct connection between schools and national politics. Neither students nor many teachers are involved in national politics. While teacher involvement in politics has some effects on schools, the most significant impact on schools comes from *hartal* or strike. Everything has to be closed in a *hartal*. Although violence is not a primary objective (but it does occur), a *hartal* can be considered as a fight in between the government and the party who declares the *hartal*, especially the main opposition. Bangladesh is a democratic country and there are many political parties operating. Two big parties have been taking turns in being government and opposition respectively since 1990. Although the opposition calls a *hartal* to protest a government decision, often the primary motivation is to show its power and strength to the government and to the people. In most cases, people do not like *hartal*, but they have no choice except to

stay home because of violence in the streets. Parents cannot take the responsibility to send their children to school in that situation. Inevitably *hartal* impacts directly on student learning.

In a *hartal*, all educational institutions, like businesses, offices and other institutions, are shut. Although the government declares the intention to keep schools open, chaos and violence in the streets by the opposition does not allow them to be open. Since *hartal* is strictly maintained in urban areas, schools there cannot find ways to operate during a *hartal*. Although *hartal* was more loosely enforced in rural areas in earlier times, recently greater violence put rural schools in a similarly vulnerable position and they cannot operate during those days. When there are serious issues between parties, the situation gets worse. *Hartal* might be called many days in a year, even consequent days in a month. Those days are cut from normal school working days. As a result, schools lose the time needed to cover the syllabus. Although some schools can manage to cover it with extra labour, most finish a year without completing the syllabus and students get less teaching than they are entitled to get in a year.

While the contextual problems discussed in this chapter do exist in Bangladesh its people do have strong hopes for quality in secondary education. There are clearly still tensions in understanding exactly what such quality entails. Nevertheless, many principals and teachers are keen to give their best effort to develop education for the future generation. The government is also committed to improvement of secondary schooling. In the last decade the government has assigned significant resources towards the assurance of quality in teaching in this level. Because schools are complex social organisations, steering them to specific goals and objectives needs effective leadership, guidance from the community, economic strength and political stability. If there is a significant lack in one factor, schools might lose direction.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

In the preceding chapter the context of Bangladesh secondary schooling and leadership in Bangladesh schools has been discussed and the particulars of the context of this study outlined. In this chapter important issues in secondary schools in Bangladesh are discussed and key theories of leadership practice are considered as a conceptual framework for this study. This chapter is divided into two parts, literature on Bangladesh schooling and international literature on school leadership and change. First, current school leadership practices and challenges in the Bangladesh context are reviewed, as reported in academic journals, books, government and non-government reports, international agency reports and newspaper articles. Then specific dimensions of school leadership and change practised at an operational level are reviewed, in particular responses to the challenges of economic, social, cultural and political influences. The review ends by discussing literature related to practice-based and customised approaches to leadership where school leaders enable incremental changes for success.

Part-I

Rethinking secondary school practices and leadership in Bangladesh

A review of recent reports on changes and challenges in Bangladesh secondary school practices related to this study are described under five themes: curriculum; engaging stakeholders; building relationships; private tutoring; and changing schools, based on the findings, suggestions and recommendations reported in the literature.

Curriculum

The recent Education Policy of Bangladesh, drafted in 2010, reported that the aim of secondary education is to develop learners with job market competencies, latent intellect and awareness of social justice (MOE, 2010). As part of these aims, Rahman et al. (2010) who analysed the historical development of secondary education in Bangladesh, noted that developing individuals to fit into and making them able to contribute fruitfully to society is the responsibility of secondary schools. But Ilon (2000) argued that costs involved in secondary education also contribute to ongoing economic inequality and also reports that the secondary curriculum is ill suited to the labour market. This is because there is little practical employment value in what secondary students are learning at school, despite the fact that students need to exert extreme effort to pass the examinations.

Other literature indicates that the Bangladesh curriculum is academic and content focused. That is why Thornton (2006) stated that the curriculum is ‘an elitist curriculum’ and suggested a need to develop policies to address the imbalance between curriculum and learning needs. UNESCO (2011) world data on education reported that Bangladesh secondary education is largely examination oriented and that marks obtained in examinations play an important role in students gaining jobs. Ilon (2000) explained that because of the focus on examinations, teaching consists of delivering content so that students can achieve well in examinations, so relevancy of the curriculum to practical life is somewhat incidental rather than purposeful.

Summative assessment, i.e. the examination system, drives what is taught in Bangladesh schools. Being conscious of the mandate to the people, in recent policy the Education Minister of Bangladesh emphasised the importance of instilling moral values, accountability and social justice in students (MOE, 2010). But Mariam and Farooqui’s (2008) research on school-based assessment noticed an absence of nurturing those values in secondary schools; they argued

that school assessment in secondary schools only covers learners' ability to memorise facts. They noted that student leadership, co-curricular activities, co-operative attitudes and social values are not evaluated in examinations. In a similar vein, UNESCO (2011) reported on shortcomings in the examination process that does not attempt to measure the wide range of learning outcomes such as skills-based or higher-order thinking. So examinations encourage memorisation at the cost of creativity and problem-solving.

As a remedial measure, the government introduced School Based Assessment (SBA) in secondary schools in 2007 (Mariam & Farooqui, 2008), but because the outcomes do not contribute to student grades in public examinations it is not highly valued. Mariam and Farooqui (2008) noted that learners tend to rely on memorisation and are not provided opportunities to develop the competences required to contribute fruitfully to society. They found that instead of improving quality through SBA, the new system of evaluation makes room for teachers to work with less integrity by providing private tuition. The Education Minister rightly noted that quality improvement of education is a big challenge (Nahid, 2011). Abdullah et al. (2008) supported the stance of the minister in their study on managerial roles and school improvement and emphasise that focus on quality without improving the managerial system at school is illusionary.

Engaging stakeholders

Engaging students in learning is a major concern in Bangladesh. Ahmed et al. (2007) conducted a countrywide analytic review of secondary education, finding that students are physically present in class without psychological and intellectual presence. They call that state 'virtual or silent exclusion' from engagement in learning and warn that this serious problem has not been investigated. This is a contextual issue in Bangladesh that the principal who is the subject of this study is trying to address.

The socio-economic status of students is highlighted as a factor that seriously affects participation in school, both in gaining entry and continuing schooling. Ahmed et al. (2006) investigated the progress and challenges of secondary education finding that the most significant reasons for non-participation in school are poverty and dislike of school; the need for children to work came next. They mentioned that low public expenditure per student at secondary level is a reason for the low quality of education. The following year, Ahmad (2007) surveyed expenditure in secondary education, finding that the private expenditure of students varies according to their family background; they argued that it has significant effects on student participation and engagement in school. They noted that the big gap in private expenditure promotes social disparity and makes it hard to provide equal opportunities for educational outcomes. The current modality of government financing does not serve the needs of the poor effectively. Ilon (2000) reported that the access of the poor to secondary schooling may look similar to that of others, but its effectiveness in improving their lives is not similar. Ahmed et al., (2007) suggested that schools should pay more attention to the progress of all children at school.

Teacher engagement in pedagogy is another concern. Ahmed et al. (2006) identified poor skills and capabilities of teachers, inadequate facilities and learning materials as reasons for poor achievement and the low quality of secondary education. UNESCO (2011) reported that poor teacher salaries are barriers to quality improvement and suggests the need for an in-depth examination of teacher salaries, subsidies and service conditions with a view to improving them. The report then turns to professional issues, noting that teachers are rarely involved in the process of curriculum development and textbook writing. Large class size impacts the engagement of teachers with students. Hamid et al., (2009) commented that large class size compromises individual instruction and interaction with and feedback from teachers. In the report by Ahmed et al. (2006), the low level of academic achievement of teachers

is mentioned as a significant factor in hindering the improvement of the quality of education.

UNESCO (2007) reported that the School Managing Committee (SMC) plays a vital role in teacher recruitment and deployment. According to the Education Act of Bangladesh (MOE, 2013b), forming the SMC is mandatory for all secondary institutions. BISED (2011) defined the SMC role as the local executive of school management. BISED stated that the goal of SMC is to ensure stakeholder participation in school management to improve the quality of learning but Thornton (2006) reported that its role is a problematic issue because some members use their authority for financial or political gain. Ahmed et al. (2006) reported that although the SMC is elected, the process of selecting the chairperson of SMC by nomination from the local MP has taken the process away from community choice. They also found that a quarter of SMC members are businessmen. They suggested that the key responsibility of school management should not be placed with people who are not interested in education. NAEM and BRAC (2004) cautioned that, “SMC members with low educational qualifications and poor understanding of school affairs are more a hindrance than a support for the schools” (p. 60).

Building relationships

In their study of teacher professional development and school improvement, Hoque, Alam and Abdullah (2011) noted that principals and teachers identify that the factor that maximizes school improvement the most is teacher collaboration. They concluded that schools and by implication, school leaders, should enable collaboration to occur. They asserted that collaboration by teachers has the power to transform individual knowledge into organisational knowledge. But Thornton (2006) noted an absence of teachers collaborating and supporting each other within secondary schools in Bangladesh. She was concerned that there is little known about the processes of setting up collaboration by teachers in developing countries. She identified the

predominant culture in teaching in developing countries that blames teachers for poor student achievement. This blame culture significantly constrains on teacher collaboration.

Abdullah et al. (2008) found positive and significant effects when principals support professional activities for teachers. They reported that managerial role of principals is moderated by collaboration with the teachers. NAEM and BRAC (2004) examined learning in successful schools in Bangladesh, finding a friendly, cordial and empathetic relationship among teachers and with principals. Students have easy access to teachers, which fuels teacher and student collaboration as being friendly, inspiring, guiding, encouraging and sometimes controlling and that enhances student achievement. In a recent newspaper article on school-parent relationship, Podder (2015) suggested that there is the need for strong co-operation and collaboration between schools and parents to support student learning in order to develop the relationships and collaboration in schools. Thornton (2006) suggested, “a true conception of sharing must start with identification of the learners’ problems and then encourage teachers to consider how they might meet the learners’ needs rather than teach ‘perfect’ lessons” (p. 194).

Private tutoring

Hamid et al. (2009) reported that private tutoring has become a common, even a default, socio-educational phenomenon in Bangladesh, widespread in both urban and rural areas and desired by secondary students, parents and society. They noted that both teachers and non-teachers provide private tutoring. In his study on secondary curriculum, Alam (2011) described private tutoring as a parallel system of teaching in secondary schools and that most teachers are involved with it. Ilon (2000) commented that private tuition is designed to help students get high marks in examinations. The reason for teachers to be engaged in private tutoring is that it provides additional income, beyond their regular salary. Hamid et al. (2009) found that students desire private tutoring because of their

perception that it is necessary for enhanced learning and achievement. Parents also want their children to have private tutoring so they are satisfied that they have done the best for their children. Ahmad (2007) found that parents place high importance on private tuition. UNESCO (2011) reported that parents send their children to private tutors and spend money to improve their examination results. However, Hamid et al. (2009) said that private tutoring is “a need rather than a luxury in the Bangladeshi context: as a necessary condition for academic success” (p. 302) because of the poor teaching and learning practices and the prevailing social belief in it.

Ahmad (2007) said that private tuition is the largest single private expenditure in the secondary schools. In a similar way Ilon (2000) noted that private tutoring can be much of the cost of secondary schooling. Ahmad (2007) reported that the poorest households have the lowest private expenditure in secondary schools. Ilon (2000) said that because private tuition costs money, the improvement to life is dissimilar for poor people who cannot afford private tuition, although they have similar access to secondary schooling. He added that the emphasis on private tuition causes inequalities in student achievement through the perpetuation of the perceived need for extra tutoring. That is why Hamid et al. (2009) advocated developing remedial teaching in the mainstream as a mechanism to stop private tuition. Though the government banned private tuition in 2012, Alamgir (2014) cautioned that the order has failed to stop the business. To get rid of this system, Hamid et al. (2009) suggested policy makers need to find out ways to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds so that they can compete with their peers from affluent families.

Changing schools

Abdullah et al. (2008) and Ali (2011) stated that the principal is the key person in leading and managing schools in Bangladesh. They urged principals to utilise strategic planning for school improvement. The importance of leadership in a context where many schools face challenges in attaining the quality of education

and where there is a need for changing the traditional school culture, is examined in my previous writing (Salahuddin, 2013). I advocated there that principals need to be active in leadership to create change in schools and that policy needs to support their ability to take initiatives. In a similar way, in a recent publication (Salahuddin & Conner, 2015) we argued distributed leadership is needed to redistribute resources, such as time and tasks, so that teachers can find ways of developing teaching and learning.

Though NAEM and BRAC (2004) found that teacher motivation is a major contributing factor to school success, Thornton (2006) reported that teachers have little scope to develop their own ideas in Bangladesh schools since meetings are mostly restricted to administrative matters. That is why Abdullah et al., (2008) advocated that principals can inspire teachers to engage in self-development by ensuring adequate time management to enable a focus on teaching and learning. A finding of NAEM and BRAC's (2004) research is that principals are committed, motivated and dynamic in their schools and likely contribute to the success of their schools. These principals believe in engaging all stakeholders in school for quality improvement. Teachers are involved in school decision-making as well as students participating in the management of classrooms as class captain and organisers of co-curricular activities.

Ahmed et al. (2006) said that because of the low efficiency of management systems, secondary education does not fulfil its role of being a vehicle of social mobility. That is why they advocated for promoting greater authority with accountability at school level for promoting and maintaining standards of learning. Given the social and economic context of Bangladesh, there is a huge need to improve the social and economic standing of its people. For this reason, Ahmed et al. (2007) urged case studies are needed to provide insight into how issues that are general within Bangladesh are evidenced in particular schools.

The above reviews indicate the direction, changes and challenges in Bangladesh secondary education, as reported in the literature. It is clear that the centralised,

relatively inflexible curriculum makes secondary education ill suited to respond quickly to the development of Bangladeshi society. It does not relate necessarily to what students are interested in learning and sacrifices creativity and thinking for memorisation and replication of facts. Although it is reported that teachers have little scope to be involved in developing the curriculum and in writing textbooks, there is no discussion in the literature about how principals and teachers can teach content through considering and connecting with students' practical lives and in getting them actively engaged in thinking. Building relationships and engaging others (students, teachers, parents and community) with schools is important for school development but substantial ways of developing such engagement, in particular the role of principals in initiating and facilitating this, tends not to be discussed.

Positive effects of the support role of principals in nurturing teacher skills are reported, and there is a call for in-depth studies that explore ways of developing teachers to improve school quality. Finding ways principal and teachers could foster student skills to meet the expectations of contemporary society needs to be investigated.

There is a clear indication that policy often fails to stop banned and unacceptable practices in schools, and there is a suggestion that more autonomy needs to be provided at school level. Leaders must be innovative and creative in their endeavours to achieve continuous school improvement. Towards this end, case studies at actual schools have been encouraged, rather than merely following foreign models.

In the next section international literature is considered that examines and theorises the kinds of issues that have been identified in Bangladesh. In particular, there is discussion of the issues principals face in leading school change in challenging contexts and ways to overcome the barriers. In doing so, special attention is given to strategies and pathways of leading school change.

Part-II

Leading school change in international literature

It is important that this thesis is grounded in the international literature on leadership and what successful leaders do to lead school change. Williams-Boyd (2002) explained that because school leadership is a complex process, it cannot be separated from the external influences of social, political, cultural, historical or ideological settings. Educational leadership around the world has been designed and adapted to the opportunities and barriers of specific contexts (Leithwood & Day, 2007; Walker & Hallinger, 2015). The argument that ‘context matters’ (Day & Leithwood, 2007; MacBeath & Townsend, 2011b; Mulford, 2010; Piggot-Irvine, 2011) is important for this thesis.

Although the focus of this thesis is leadership of a school in Bangladesh, the complex phenomenon of leadership in educational organisations needs to be considered more generally for it to be applied to specific contexts. For this reason, in this section the focus is on how researchers define the goals, objectives and characteristics of leadership in education. There is consideration of change variables that leaders are focusing on and practices that have been shown to contribute to school success in different contexts. These studies provide grounding for the outcomes of this thesis.

Leadership is often identified as a process by which a person influences a group of individuals to reach a common goal in a particular context (Bush, 2011; Cammock, 2003; Northouse, 2007). Leadership processes in school contexts are broadly defined as how to influence the enthusiasm, knowledge, affect or practices of other members of schools or the way leaders interpret how they can influence others (Bush, 2011; Riley & MacBeath, 2003; Spillane, 2006). Elmore (2000) emphasises that effective leadership processes at school can be learned.

Effective leadership has been identified as contributing significantly to developing learning at schools, both for improving student outcomes and for

teacher professional learning. Researchers argue about the notion of leadership for improving schools either from a policy perspective (Fullan, 2001a, 2003, 2007, 2010a; Robinson et al., 2009) or at operational level in schools (Fevre & Robinson, 2015; Elmore, 2003; Harris, 2002; Hopkins, 2007; Stoll & Louis, 2007). From the view of policy improvement, the factors often highlighted are leadership of decision-making, creating structures and events and management of education and curriculum improvement. The operational leadership at school is mostly discussed as developing strategies of teaching and learning, providing resources, building teacher skills, developing relationships and engaging others in school (Harris, 2002, 2010b; Robinson, 2011; Spillane, 2006).

There is no doubt that principals in schools around the world are all involved in change management to varying extents. Change is defined within two parameters: systemic or operational change. Some researchers work with and discuss systemic or wider systems change of education (e.g. Fullan, 2001a, 2003, 2007; Louis & Robinson, 2012; Robinson et al., 2009). Aspects they focus on include changes to policy, curriculum, administration, structure and culture changes. In contrast, other researchers focus on the operational changes for school improvement (e.g. Bush, 2009; Elmore, 2003; Harris, 2002; Hopkins, 2007). Their emphasis is usually on pedagogical, cultural, environmental and practice changes for the improvement of teaching and learning in schools. Leadership that includes change management may require leaders to introduce and implement changes using strategic planning, creativity and innovation (Cammock, 2003; Fullan, 2007).

This study is about leadership and change at the operational level at one school. It considers factors for leadership and change required for effective change in a school: thus this area is discussed in relation to the literature. Five themes are discussed. Each can act as either an enabler or barrier to school change depending on when, where and how the change is implemented. The five themes are: creative planning for change; inspiring and co-opting others; power sharing

and capacity building; relationship, trust and collaboration; and resourcing and facilitating others.

Creative planning for change

Fullan warned that school change does not always lead to school improvement (Fullan, 2001b). He explained that educational change is often complex and points out that educational change may be technically simple but socially complex. He called for leaders to be innovative and creative in implementing ideas for school change. Harris (2000) evaluated the policy change initiatives in the United Kingdom and highlights the need to find 'what works' in different layers within the school rather than 'what fits' from the central policy in changing schools. Harris (2005) noted that most large-scale reforms in school change ignore the wider influences of social, organisational and contextual influences. In their attempts for school change, principals often fail to create the conditions necessary to lead the school to success (Harris, 2004, 2010a). She noted the importance of creativity and innovation in planning for change and improvement so principals are encouraged to lead creatively. As Csikszentmihalyi (1997) commented, "While the rest of us are struggling at boring jobs, they (creative leaders) have the luxury of doing what they love to do" (p. 106). The question is, do principals realise this luxury?

In discussing what effective leaders do, Mulford (2005), who has undertaken significant research on school leadership in Australia, showed that successful principals perform a core set of basic leadership skills such as developing a shared vision, building individual capacity and redesigning organisational structures and processes for school success. Likewise in a research project on Danish schools, Moos (2011) found that school leaders need to be competent in many functions such as communication, establishing and maintaining positive relationships and comprehensive knowledge and analysis of others work in order to change their schools successfully. Fullan, Cuttress and Kilcher (2009) stressed that knowledge of implementing change strategies is important. They

said, “The presence of change knowledge does not guarantee success, but its absence ensures failure” (p. 9). So knowledge about change management can support principals to mobilise others to help to solve unfamiliar problems, perhaps in creative and innovative ways. Harris (2002) suggested that the lack of careful attention to change processes is a major reason for failure in school change initiatives.

Kaser and Halbert (2009) stressed that the risk involved in changing any practices is because the change may not fit the context or style of every individual involved. Fullan (2001a) said that any change where individuals are asked to reflect on their own beliefs tends to cause an initial drop in performance and creates feelings of anxiousness and confusion. He recommended that leaders should anticipate ‘an implementation dip’ phenomena and be creative in initiating and implementing change. Gu (2011) suggested, “Successful principals keep their fingers on the pulse of the most cutting-edge educational innovations and practices and strategically inject them into the process of school improvement (p. 996). However, Talbert (2010) reminded us about the challenge in every step of change and posits that, “Effective leadership addresses the challenges for change at each stage” (p. 565). There are always on-going processes to consider.

Inspiring and co-opting others

Harris (2002) identified the factors of school improvement, especially the importance of involvement of teachers, “The success of school improvement depends upon the extent to which teachers and students are centrally engaged in the process of change” (p. 115). She clarified the importance of teacher engagement because teachers are the instruments in the change process. She also emphasised the importance of involving students and advocated for parental engagement since their involvement can improve the standard of student achievement at school (Harris, 2010b). This idea is emphasised by Levin (2010), “Change strategies are comprehensive with an emphasis not only on

professional capacity building and strong leadership, but also on targeted resources and effective engagement of parents and the broader community” (p. 309). However, inspiration and engagement depend on the communication of leaders and followers as Mulford (2006) said, “The first element (of school success) relates to how people are communicated with and treated” (p. 47).

Fullan (2001a) introduced the notion of engagement of all at school where everybody is a change agent in that they all have a collective responsibility and moral purpose for ensuring its success. He called for positive pressure, such as non-punitive accountability, to motivate people to do more (Fullan, 2010b). Fullan (2001a) described a moral purpose related to school change that serves the interests of teachers, students, parents and society, with the intention of making a positive difference to the achievement of future citizens. He urged that leaders should leverage moral purpose to motivate people “to pursue a desired goal” (p. 19). The purpose of change should be clear to others as Harris (2002) stated, “If the reasons for the change are not transparent it is unlikely that teachers will be committed to working towards the change” (p. 19). Dempster (2011) saw the purpose of reviewing and renewing educational practices is to “. . . contribute to the improvement of children’s and young people’s lives through learning” (p. 98). Fullan et al. (2009) advocated that significant moral purpose, makes others committed “to raise the bar and close the gap in student achievement” (p. 10).

Harris (2002) said, “While the rationale for change may be clear, its manifestation within a school may create difficulties because of the social processes involved” (p. 35). Fevre and Robinson (2015) mentioned similar difficulties, “Principals struggled to find respectful ways of challenging the parents’ and teachers’ taken-for-granted assumptions and this limited the robust examination of competing views about the nature of the problem and how to resolve it” (p. 85). Fullan (2001a) analysed the dual personality of change and used that to encourage leaders, “Change is a leader’s friend, but it has a split personality: its nonlinear messiness gets us into trouble. But the experience of

this messiness is necessary in order to discover the hidden benefits - creative ideas and novel solutions are often generated when the status quo is disrupted" (p. 107). So leaders need to be creative in inspiring and engaging others to the complex process of change as Frost (2011) stated "If the aim is to create a sense of community . . . then what is needed is a set of strategies that enable students to experience the school as a community" (p. 871). For more effective change in schools, Fullan (2007) recommended that leaders find solutions from their people. Harris (2002) suggested, "Within the process of school improvement, no one can tell people what to do. They have to be allowed to search for their own solutions and to instigate and manage change inside their own institutions" (p. 18).

Power sharing and capacity building

Harris (2002) said that leading change in a school require power sharing with others and building their capacity. One way to ensure power sharing is by empowering emergent leaders and distributing leadership roles amongst the staff (Daley, 2011; Jansen, Cammock, & Conner, 2011; Stoll & Louis, 2007). In effective schools leadership is not an individual responsibility as Harris (2002) discovered in her research on successful schools in the UK, "Leadership is viewed in such schools in a distributed way where teachers are also leaders and contribute to the overall direction and vision of the school" (p. 116). In a similar vein, Bush and Glover (2014) supported the distributed leadership model and the part teachers play, "It is difficult to imagine distributed leadership becoming embedded in schools without teacher leaders" (p. 562). Stoll and Louis (2007) stressed that identifying leadership attributes of staff and allowing the opportunity for these to be fostered through the distribution of responsibilities and tasks, is essential to ensure the sustainability of school improvement. For them, this is what capacity building means. Fullan (2007) pointed out that there is no other way to change a school effectively without improving skills of teachers and principals.

Capacity building is a key defining characteristic of school improvement in many studies (Fullan, 2001a; Hallinger & Heck, 2011; Harris, 2002, 2010b; Robinson, 2011). Fullan et al. (2009) noted, “Building capacity involves developing new knowledge, skills, and competencies; new resources (time, ideas, materials); and new shared identity and motivation to work together for greater change” (p. 10). Capacity building, which starts at individual level and shifts to collaborative ways of working, promotes mutual learning in a shared way as Zidan (2011) said, “building of interpersonal capacity also implies a well-functioning team of co-workers and colleagues working and learning together” (p. 1029). Fullan (2001a) said that leaders play key roles in developing a culture of change that involves, “producing the capacity to seek, critically assess, and selectively incorporate new ideas and practices” (p. 44). Senge (2010) argued that capacity is required in changing schools to, “. . . prioritize and persist in supporting new thinking and new practice” (p. 150). Various research studies have shown different pathways of building capacities collaboratively. Harris (2010a) advocated for distributed leadership, where decision-making is shared, because it is one of the most influential ideas in school leadership and can be distinguished from several other models by collective focus on capacity building of all.

Bush and Glover (2014) identified many complexities related to capacity building through distributed leadership. They noted, “Difficulties arise when the assumption of shared values is contradicted by the reality of conflicting values” (p. 561). Conflict and resistance depends on the presentation of change as Harris (2002) said, “The way that change is presented to others is critically important and will determine the degree of resistance or support that will ensue” (p. 37). Lack of legislative knowledge impacts on capacity building at school as MacBeath and Townsend (2011a) observed, “New waves of legislation have failed to recognise the inherent professional capital and the deskilling of teachers that occurs when the professional capacity is dissipated” (p. 10). Darling-Hammond (2010) suggested that flexible policies and more freedom at school might help

nourishing capacity building because, “Efforts to build the capacity of teachers differ from past educational change strategies in their concern for building capacity rather than tightening controls over education” (p. 508). So, rather than suggesting any specific leadership model, Gronn (2010) hybrid model of leadership could harness the best of both individual and distributed efforts for school development.

Relationship, trust and collaboration

Fullan (2001a) noted, “The single factor common to every successful change initiative is that relationships improve. If relationships improve, things get better” (p. 5). He defined the relationships as those, “that make the difference in school” (p. 51). This point is supported in Lovett and Andrews (2011) work on teachers’ understanding of leadership for learning where they stressed the importance of working closely with teachers to build a relationship that “enables teachers and their students to engage in ongoing and productive learning within rapidly changing political and social contexts” (p. 721). Zembylas (2010) considered teachers’ emotions in educational change, finding the significance of building relationships as, “The success of reform efforts that are based on collaborations among teachers is directly related to the relationships” (p. 232). Portin and Knapp (2011) posited, “creative stepping” as a process which means, “finding ways to re-establish relationships on a somewhat different footing with colleagues they have known for years” (p. 522) as important for principals to understand. Fullan (2001a) explained the reason for “strategic stepping” by pointing out that there can be a risk, “Relationships are powerful, which means they can also be powerfully wrong” (p. 65), although he strongly advocated building relationships for school change.

The power of relationships is dependent on trust, which is considered a core factor of school change as Stoll (2010) said, “Without a climate of trust and respect, people don’t feel safe to take the risks associated with collaboration, open dialogue and opening up their practice to potential scrutiny by others” (p.

479). Trust among teachers drives them to share their experience and to gain new learning. Lovett and Andrews (2011) expanded that idea, “Shared experiences of and about their own practice in classrooms allow teachers to gain new or enhanced understandings and to consider alternatives, especially once they learn to trust and value their interactions with their colleagues” (p. 722). Trust needs to be instilled in principals and teachers. Sutton (2010) said that principals require trust from their teachers so they can talk about their practice without fear of being judged or constantly evaluated. In the same way students need to trust their teachers and to rely on their teaching, “Students will need to trust their teachers’ intentions when they check prior learning and current interests (p. 892). Fevre and Robinson (2015) and Parsons and Beauchamp (2011) argued that, for principals to be effective leaders they need the confidence and trust of teachers by engaging in productive and respectful conversations about teaching and learning. These provide the opportunity for teachers to collaborate and to learn from each other. Fullan et al., (2009) emphasised that, “One of the most powerful drivers of change involves learning from peers, especially those who are further along in implementing new ideas” (p. 12).

In their meta-analysis of school leadership Robinson et al. (2009) identified collaboration as a significant factor in school development in New Zealand. Hopkins (2010) agreed that collaboration is one of the key drivers of school reform. Chiome (2011) studied school leadership in Zimbabwe and found that collaboration was important for advancing student learning. Harris (2002) held that “the existence of collaboration and mutual support amongst staff” (p. 113) is an underlying feature of highly successful school improvement. Teachers want to be working together for school improvement. Senge (2010) also supported the idea of collaboration, “Appreciating collaboration is rooted in understanding the limits of each person’s mental models, starting with your own” (p. 148). Darling-Hammond (2010) noted that, if leaders are successful in developing effective

collaboration in school, it replaces the 'sinking with complexities' to 'swimming with joy' in school change.

Talbert (2010) noted that often school schedules present a significant challenge in finding time for developing collaboration amongst teachers so when they do get together, the time needs to be focused and well spent. Darling-Hammond (2010) said that often teachers feel isolated in their classrooms and this can be a constraint because they do not get much time to enable them to collaborate. Fullan (2001a) held that collaboration is essential for school change; it is important that the collaboration focuses on good practices and does not "reinforce each other's bad or ineffective practice" (p. 67).

Collaboration and collegiality can enhance learning communities as they evolve and can generate new understanding about teaching and learning in schools. These new understandings can be assisted by teachers helping other teachers to make connections (Stoll, 2010) or by increasing the coherence of programmes (Robinson, 2011). Tie (2011) found that, in Malaysian schools, the "Principal must become the promoter and facilitator of a purposeful professional learning community" (p. 428). Stoll (2010) posited that learning communities do not just happen in a school; capacity building is necessary to communicate others effectively. Lovett and Andrews (2011) suggested that schools must find ways to "foster these collegial interactions" (p. 722) so that teachers can learn from one another.

Mitchell and Sackney (2011) discussed affective conditions for effective professional learning communities and note that "Leaders are therefore charged with the task of building a safe and supportive learning community, for it is in community that people feel connected, value others, and are valued by others. It is the community that binds individuals together and obligates them to one another" (p. 979). Lack of opportunities is often blamed as a reason for not developing effective learning communities. Senge (2010) discussed an interesting result in his study on building larger learning communities where

scarcity of resources worked as an enabler in developing the community, “Ironically, building this larger community is often more common in poorer settings, where resources are scarce and people must work together” (p. 142). There are many reasons why learning communities become ineffective as Robinson (2011) mentioned including counterproductive beliefs of teachers and divergent views on teaching learning. Stoll (2010) asserted that change in schools is most likely if “learning communities cross the boundaries” (p. 472). For this reasons, Stoll and Louis (2007) suggested professional learning communities at school that include systematic extension of divergent knowledge and learning to serve the needs of all students.

Resourcing and facilitating others

Robinson (2011) saw strategic resourcing as a key dimension for leadership in effective self-managing schools. She argued that leaders who follow a strategic approach to resourcing ensure that “money, time, and people are used in ways that reflect priority goals. These goals drive how they organize budgets, timetables, and staffing” (p. 61). Levin (2010) advocated for re-examining human and financial resources to see whether “these actually are the most effective ways to use resources in support of students” (p. 321). Mulford (2010) claimed that smart leadership is needed in today’s environment of complex leadership and suggests that leaders need to secure all the resources available for learning and that these resources need to be strategically deployed. Without adequate resourcing, Harris (2002) believed change cannot be implemented effectively.

Lack of adequate resources also has a negative impact on student learning. Falk (2010) commented education and care are important for all children but is more critical for those students in schools that have limited resources. In a similar vein, Mejia-Smith and Gordon (2010) who conducted research on relationships between class, race and academic achievement in the USA, noted that for disadvantaged children “Often, their level of achievement is a result of their prevailing lack of access to resources and opportunities” (p. 996). In the context

of serving poor students, Talbert (2010) suggested that principals should use a professional approach where they, “use organizational resources and persuasion to leverage teacher involvement in facilitated work” and secure resources from within and outside the system. In contrast, Robinson (2011) claimed not much is known about leadership for strategic resourcing, the rationales or reasons why decisions are made and that often leadership studies are descriptive rather than analytic and, “tell us more about leaders’ involvement in resourcing than about whether it is strategic” (p. 64).

Because resources are not infinite, staff development also needs to be strategic (Bubb & Earley, 2011). Leaders must be forward thinking, to foresee what lies ahead and which aspects might be important to focus on for future planning. Strategic resourcing may also require consideration of the impact a decision may have on teachers’ regular work. Robinson (2011) put this succinctly, “Strategic resourcing is simple to explain and complicated to do” (p. 61) because leaders need to be creative and strategic in resourcing their money, time and staff. Hallinger and Heck (2011) reminded leaders about the challenge of school change and strategic resourcing, “they do so with the constraints, resources, and opportunities afforded by the school’s current capacity for improvement in mind” (p. 475).

This review clearly indicates the dimensions of school reform under these five themes. Whether the dimensions are considered individually or as collaborative factors, change works as a holistic process. The process of school change can be depicted in this framework:

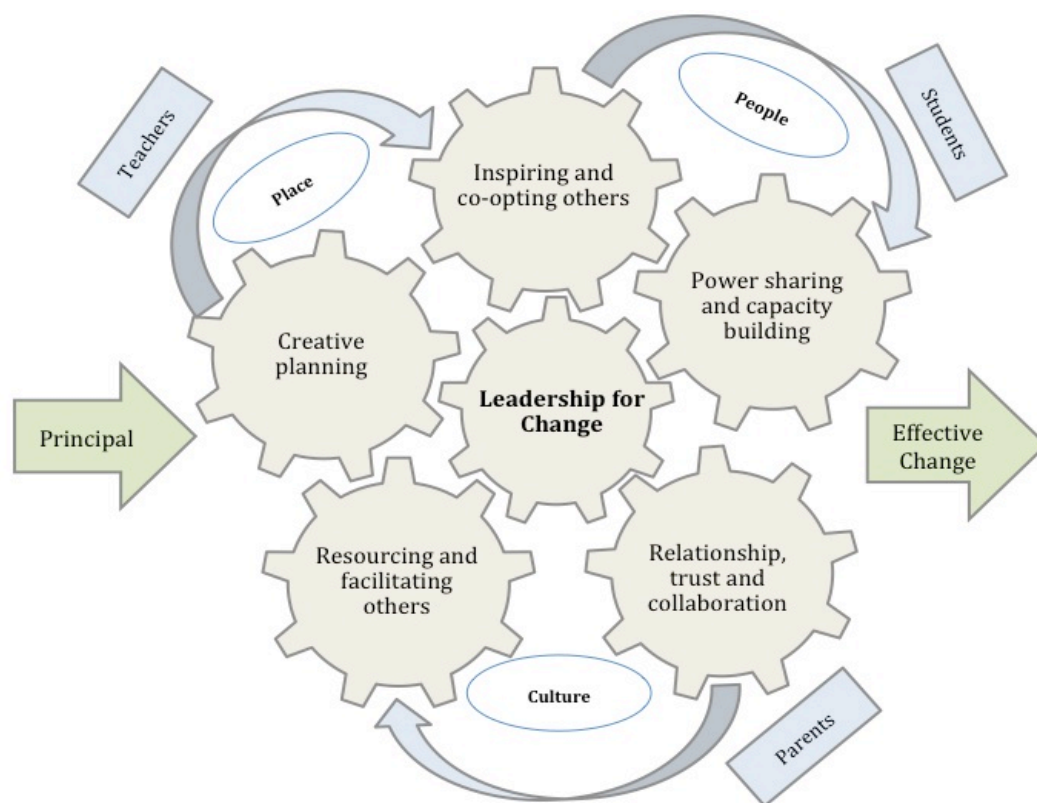


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of school leadership for change

The change process is implementation-oriented rather than instrumental. The conceptual framework of this study, in which each theme churns separately and collectively, aims to address the main research question: How does a principal in a Bangladeshi secondary school create the changes needed to improve student learning, develop teacher agency, and contribute to community well-being? It draws upon and weaves together the complexities, challenges and strategies in leading change in secondary schools.

Chapter Four

Methodology

As is explained in Chapter One, this project investigates the leadership strategies used by a Bangladeshi principal to change his school. The context of the school has been described in Chapter Two. Leadership and change for school improvement have been discussed in relation to national and international literature to develop a conceptual framework for this study in Chapter Three. The study is founded on the research question: How does a principal in a Bangladeshi secondary school create the changes needed to improve student learning, develop teacher agency and contribute to community well-being? The following sub-questions evolved while exploring the main research question:

1. What values and strategies are evident in the principal's practice?
2. What is the impact of the social and educational context?
3. How does he enable his teachers to develop their capability in leading learning?
4. How do the implemented changes contribute to student learning?
5. How does he involve parents and community with the school?
6. What can this case study contribute to Bangladeshi understandings of school leadership?

This study focuses on accounts by the principal, his staff and students and seeks to understand their actions, perceptions, intentions and challenges. In this chapter the qualitative methodological approach I have used is described, focusing on the value of case study and detailing the actual methods for gaining information, the process of analysis and the choices I have made in reporting the findings.

Research paradigm

This study takes place within the general parameters of qualitative research. Such an approach is based on the theoretical assumptions that in understanding human behaviour meaning and process are important and it is necessary to collect and analyse descriptive data in inductive ways (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2015). This study concentrates on the leadership practices in a school as a specific case (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Stake, 2005, 2008) and pays close attention to the influence of social, political, cultural and other contextual factors (Stake, 2005). With its openness to alternative and multiple ways of knowing, the qualitative research provides a useful platform to investigate practices within the school.

Case study

The accounts given by the principal, teachers, students, SMC members and parents about their perceptions and experiences of leadership are bounded in the time, place and overall context in which the study took place. Such a bounded system is typical of case study design (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 2008; Merriam, 1998). The issues, problems and complexities within a case are important to provide a rich and holistic description of these in the natural school setting, so that readers can understand practices within their real context rather than as abstractions in neutral space. A case study approach provides opportunity to collect in-depth data (Stake 2005), to give thick description (Geertz, 1983) of leadership practices in the particular challenging context of this urban school. Analysis of data also focuses on capturing the complexities within the case.

Selecting the case

An intrinsic case study, such as this, begins with a case that had already been identified as of prominent interest to the researcher (Stake, 2005, p. 450; Merriam, 1988). I selected my research site before formal study began. But selecting a site where changes are taking place within the context of economical,

social and cultural challenges and where I would be given generous admission as a researcher was a complex task for me. In finding a school, my intention was to find one that shares similar challenging factors with a majority of schools in Bangladesh but is overcoming those challenges through effective leadership strategies. Finding a school with a high reputation could have been achieved through Education Board's documents, which names schools that have improved achievement in public examinations. But such documents do not report how principals manage social and economic challenges.

My selection of a school with an innovative principal began during my Masters at the University of Canterbury when I had the opportunity to meet Bangladeshi principals who came to the university for a course on educational leadership. During their visit we discussed issues in school leadership and explored their various leadership experiences. The unexpected earthquake in September 2010 prompted a closer relationship because the principals needed moral support as they were vulnerable and far away from their families; also my house provided them a place to celebrate their most significant religious ceremony, 'Eid-ul-Fitr'. The principal of Shanjeebon School appeared to have a different approach from usual, in working for change in a challenging context. His ideas about leadership impressed me as being creative, and this creativity was also recognised by the trainers. So I aimed to work with him for my PhD project.

The site was chosen purposively to develop a better understanding of this particular case because of the willingness of the principal to participate in the study, a consequent expectation of accessing in-depth data and easy access to participants. The school's contextual challenges, especially having economically unprivileged students and a largely illiterate parent community, made the school a unique case for exploring change in a Bangladeshi context. I visited the school in 2011 and confirmed it as a useful site for my study.

I developed a friendly and trustful relationship (Patton, 2015) with the principal. Though I was initially far away from him in New Zealand, communication by

phone, Skype and emails allowed us to regularly discuss the issues that arose in his school and the strategies used in his leadership. When I began my data collection, I was on good terms with the principal, but not yet with the teachers. The friendship with the principal permitted me to get easy access to the school, teachers, students, parents and SMC members. The teachers quickly accepted me as a friend of the school and they were friendly with me.

Being a friend of principal and teachers perhaps makes it more likely that I would collect data that is positive in its nature, but, while it is important to reflect critically about bias, my study focuses on an exploration of the practical experiences of the principal and of the strategies he developed rather than any kind of neutral evaluation of his leadership.

Participants

A case study is focused on getting in-depth responses to the research questions (Flybjerg, 2011; Stake, 2005). To receive such information I talked with the principal, teachers, students, school managing committee members and parents. I also collected related school documents and photographs. The principal is the central character in this study. All work in the school is completed under his leadership. I consider him as central character not because of his top position in the school, but because his innovative strategies in leadership make him central. He was the main data source for understanding the ways of leadership and strategies he uses in engaging others in school improvement.

Because another focus was to explore the engagement of teachers in school leadership, a group of teachers was included as participants in this study. My intention was to get data from the teachers who had various leadership roles to find out how they got involved in leadership and how they were acting in leadership roles as teachers. Since these teachers have experience of formal leadership practices, dealing with the principal and driving the work of the school through various complexities, they were in a position to provide rigorous

data about the leadership of the principal and of themselves. Five faculty leaders were participants in this study. In addition, I included another teacher who works as a coordinator for an international project and who also leads some local projects. A teacher who worked as a representative in SMC was also a participant in this study.

Engaging students in school and community was a prominent initiative in this school. I wanted to find out how students were involved in leadership activities, how their involvement had contributed to school improvement and what were the roles of the principal and teachers in engaging them. So students were important participants in my study. From the large number of students, I considered only senior student leaders from Grade Nine because they had been at the school for an extended period. Although this research did not focus on gender perspectives, I deliberately included both boy and girl leaders to get comprehensive data from the two school shifts. Based on their availability, ten student leaders from each gender were selected as participants. I selected the upper grade students due to their experience in school and leadership.

Because parents are active participants in development in this school, I added parents to my study. Two parents formally participated in this study and some of others were included in an informal way. The way they were included is discussed later in this chapter. To gather data about the school leadership and development from a parental view, I added the joint convener of the guardian forum (an organisation of parents and caregivers). The guardian forum was actively involved in school improvement initiatives. Another parent was included to provide data from the social and communal aspects of the school. Getting a parent representative to SMC was not possible since an ad-hoc committee worked for the school at that time.

The School Managing Committee (SMC) plays a local executive role in school management. Without their cooperation leading a school to success would be fairly impossible in the Bangladesh context. So getting data from SMC members

was important for this study. Initially my goal was to collect data from the chairman of SMC and two other members. Due to the chairman's business as a parliament member (MP), it was difficult to get meeting times with him. Generally, MPs are overloaded with their routine job and hardly ever find time to devote to a school. The principal agreed with this statement. But I was happy because I found two other members of SMC as participants for my study. In addition, the focal person for this study, the principal, works as the secretary of SMC by position and therefore is included actively.

In the table below I list all the key participants, their respective roles and their pseudonyms as follows:

Table 1: Pseudonyms

Identity	Role	Pseudonym
Principal	Principal	Nazrul
Vice Principal	Vice Principal-Morning shift	Ointika
Teacher	Faculty leader-Bangla	Tasnim
Teacher	Faculty leader-English	Mahtab
Teacher	Faculty leader-Science	Shahrim
Teacher	Faculty leader-Business	Enayet
Teacher	Faculty leader-Arts	Aziz
Teacher	Coordinator, CCP	Suva
Teacher	SMC member	Mahathir
Student	Cluster leader	Shayan
Student	Cluster leader	Pallob
Student	Cluster leader	Shimanto
Student	Cluster leader	Tauhid
Student	Cluster leader	Pintu
Student	Cluster leader	Mim
Student	Cluster leader	Bristy
Student	Cluster leader	Keya
Student	Cluster leader	Rekha
Student	Cluster leader	Sonia
Parent	Joint Secretary, Guardian forum	Bahadur
Parent	Parent	Atahar
Advocate	SMC member	Zakir

My role within the research

Janesick (2003) stresses the importance of identifying the researcher's role and acknowledging the level of privilege and access to the site. I identify my role through several lenses: my current profession; family background; and social-cultural identity. As a professional who works with the secondary school teachers, I engage, although at second hand, with the concerns and practices of schools. I was born into and grew up in a secondary school teacher's family. The

language and culture of the participants is the same as my own. Based on these factors, I place myself 'in the middle' of insider/outsider (Breen, 2007) in this study.

My position is much as Patton (2015) describes as *human instrument*, mediating data collection and interpretation. The participants regarded me as someone with insider knowledge because of my relationship with the principal and my family and work background, although, as Ochieng (2010, p. 1730) observed in a similar situation, "not as one of them". The reasons participants treated me as an insider include a common language, professional similarity and the sharing of a bonding culture. Due to these factors, I was able to understand their practices, experiences, struggles and challenges relatively easily. In contrast, due to my profession and current research, I was labelled as a sort of expert in this field, which positioned me as an outsider. Because of the fluid role, I consider my position to be in the middle.

Data collection

A number of methods of data collection were used, including audio-recorded interviews, professional dialogues, observation, group discussions, field notes, school documents and archival photos. As Creswell (2007) and Patton (2015) suggest, such multiplicity of sources allowed me to capture more of the complexity and rich detail of perceptions, practices and outcomes. The multiplicity of sources also provided different perspectives and so allowed me to develop a more rounded understanding of what was happening in the school.

Interviews

Interviews were an important instrument in this research. Merriam (1998) describes interview as a purposeful conversation between two people, and Fontana and Frey (2005) explain that interviews lead interviewer and participants to create a contextual-bounded story. I approached interviewing as

a process of shared conversation and as a means of developing and unpacking stories about leadership in the school.

I began to conduct my initial interviews with Nazrul, the principal. Due to his open office door policy, our first attempts to talk were often interrupted by teachers, parents, students or community people. Consequently, Nazrul invited me to conduct the interviews in his house, and there the interviews turned into a form of professional dialogue. I will discuss the concept of professional dialogue next.

Because of his willingness and openness in providing information, Nazrul designated a teacher, who had a broad understanding of the operations of the school and who performed as a coordinator for an international project in the school, to brief me about any areas I needed. Nazrul relied on this teacher due to his experience and communication skills. I conducted a series of interviews with this teacher and appreciated his full cooperation in providing information.

In selecting people for interviews, my decision was influenced by two main factors. The first was that each of the people I interviewed was actively involved in the process of change and improvement in the school. The second factor was access. Though the present SMC chairman strongly supported all initiatives for school change, his business in other work and limited access did not allow me to interview him. Besides, approaching an informant to speak freely and in depth requires a strong relationship with the person, which I lacked with the chairman. I did seek help from Nazrul finding the right informants to gather enough in depth data for my study. Nazrul guided me towards those he thought would be most able to discuss what was happening in the school, although he was open to all potential participants. The interviews I conducted were in two formats: one-to-one and in small groups. I used the latter format especially with faculty leaders of teachers and cluster leaders of students. The choice depended on time, availability and preference of participants.

In terms of approach, the interviews were predominantly unstructured (Fontana & Frey, 2005). I tried to combine a skeletal structure with an open-ended conversation with participants that would allowed them to elaborate their understanding on school changes. The semi-structured aspect derived from some pre-decided questions that were planned to elicit particular important information from particular participants. For example, I asked the vice-principal about the change initiatives by Nazrul and their impact on school improvement. I asked the faculty leaders about how the faculty in Shanjeebon School was developed and about the leadership of a faculty. All the participants had their own understandings, views and personal focus in responding to any issue. Hence the unstructured conversation allowed them scope to explain and explore their beliefs and understanding of school changes freely and in their own way.

I conducted all the interviews myself. My role in the interviews was twofold: directive and non-directive. If the talk flowed, my role was only as a listener and to put some agreement sounds, such as '*jee/hu*' (Bangla words that means yes/mm) to encourage speakers and to indicate that they were on a good track. Sometimes I repeated their key points to enhance the sense of comfort in the conversation. If the talk went too far off the topic, I sometimes provoked them to provide an example to encourage them to talk more deeply. For example, the following dialogue occurred in the interview with Bahadur, the joint convener of the guardian forum. He was talking about the changes in teaching and learning at the school:

Bahadur: This principal began parents meetings in this school. Because of this meeting, we can talk about learning issues and teachers understand what they need to do.

Me: You mean teachers consider the issues you raised and take necessary actions to resolve them?

Bahadur: Jee, jee (Yeah, yeah...)

Me: Is it possible to remember an example of when you or someone raised an issue in a meeting and then teachers took initiative to resolve that?

Bahadur: I can give you example of mine that was about teaching in class. Previous time teachers went to class and.....

My intention in these dialogues was not to direct the respondents, but to engage them in exploring and sharing their understandings about the school leadership.

Professional dialogue

Most of my discussion with Nazrul took place in his home and took the form of an on-going *professional dialogue*. The term is widely used in literature regarding professional learning (for example, Simoncini, Lasen, & Rocco, 2014; Grey, 2011), where it describes a process of reflective conversation that allows participants to shape their understandings of their intentions and practice. I call my discussions with the principal professional dialogue because they went beyond the structured interview; they were open-ended, two-sided, and developed a continuous process of reflection. It opened the door of sharing professional experiences in depth with trust and reciprocity what would not be possible through formal interviews.

At the initial stage, Nazrul and I planned to conduct a series of interviews with him at his office. On the first day, he was eagerly waiting for me and I began to record his talking. Due to his open door policy, teachers, parents, students or community members often entered into his room to seek help or to discuss an issue. Suddenly we had to stop in the middle of talking. Even, once he advised his staff to tell parents and community people to come another time to meet him, as he is busy with an interview. But the staff could not prevent the people from entering into his room. We tried to conduct the interview on three separate days and the situation did not change in any way. The situation was quite uncomfortable for the principal and he tried to find a way to co-operate with me

more effectively. He offered me a chance to come to his house and discuss matters with him for the whole day during the weekend.

While I was bit worried about the amount of his time for interviews, the invitation to come to his home for discussion was a relief for me. He assured me he would give the whole day on Saturday in the coming weekend and discuss all issues I want to know about. He also offered further days until we completed our discussion. That freedom motivated me to initiate and be fully engaged in talking about every aspect of his leadership I wanted to know about for my study. In digging for information, we both were conscious of sharing professional and life experiences about his journey at the school rather than looking at the clock. The story, in particular cases, extended through his life journey even from his childhood, and the way he grew up experiencing a number of life challenges. Perhaps, the location, extended time and personal environment at home provoked him to recall these experiences as they related to developing and pursuing creativity in his leadership. The dialogues extended for forty hours at home over four days, but the process of observing him at work and sharing material continued for the whole period of the data collection. We still continue our dialogues through digital sources such as email, phone or Skype.

I should explain the ways we constructed the dialogues at his house. In a sunny morning at the first weekend, after communicating several times through cell phone to reach the location, I arrived at Nazrul's house at 9.30am. After a short introduction to his wife and sons, I was offered morning snacks. We started talking at around 10.00am. I started with general conversation to 'break the ice', as suggested by Fontana and Frey (2005). Perhaps Nazrul was ready to share his stories, especially talking about his initiatives. The first session continued until lunch at 2.00pm with another snack at 12.00pm but the snack did not stop our discussion. There was a sense of the urgency of time, perhaps in both of us, for telling and hearing different stories about his principalship in Shanjeebon School. My role in discussion was mainly that of listener. At the beginning of our discussion, I requested him not to consider our talking as interviews, but rather

as sharing experiences with a colleague who wants to learn about secondary school leadership. He shared all his interesting journeys, one after another, very enthusiastically. When the lunch was ready for us, I shared it as is the custom in our culture and our relationship as friends.

While he was talking, he permitted me to keep the audio recorder on and I noted my responses in a diary without interrupting him and reiterated the responses if needed. Sometimes I challenged some of his thoughts to give him the opportunity to explain and also explore further. One such example is:

Nazrul: Another factor was selection of teachers to change this school. I was quite firm in recruiting quality teachers. I did not recruit any low quality teacher. If a teacher is not qualified, she or he cannot build good humans. It is not like that there was no pressure in teacher recruitment.

Me: Yeah. In Bangladesh secondary schools there are complaints that SMC members use their power and authority in recruitment. Often it is considered that changing them is impossible. How did you initiate the new journey in recruitment?

Nazrul: I had to fight for long time in that case. I had to change the normal trend slowly.

Me: How long did it take to get to a neutral position for recruitment after your joining?

Nazrul: To get to a neutral position for recruitment, it took 3 to 4 years. Actually it took around seven years for 100% neutral position. But during the introductory years, I had conflicts with SMC members and they wanted to make trouble. It was hard for me to overcome that situation. 2004 to 2007 was a challenging time for me.

The dialogues on the first day were quite interesting and thought provoking for my study. When we finished for the day it was 8pm. That was a long day for us, but full of professional talking. Different dimensions in leading the school evolved through talking and both of us were interested to carry on the dialogue into other days. He asked me how many further days we might need. I replied at least three days. We settled three further dates in the upcoming weekends. We spent those times in similar ways and it gave us an opportunity to explore his understandings and experiences at length and in depth. Nazrul shared every bit of his journey as a principal in that school. He was quite open in telling the sensitive stories, including ones about threats and life risks:

Nazrul: The SMC members started to dislike me. Once they wanted to recruit a new principal because I did not follow their instructions and their purpose was not served.

Me: What were the claims they made?

Nazrul: They accused me of down-grading results in school during my time. Another claim was that I had not stood at first position in the recruitment test. The chairman of SMC at that time recruited me superseding the numbers one to five, as my position was six.

Me: How was your life in risk?

Nazrul: I was in life risk because they were influential people in that area. Still they are influential. It was tough to challenge them when I do work in their boundary, and it was not good for me. They even challenged me with guns.

This discussion of guns may not seem like professional talking, but in Bangladeshi context accounts such as this might well be the unknown story of many principals but they are never reported and have not been included in any

research. It was personal information such as this that I had the opportunity to discover through long professional dialogues.

The dialogues did not finish with the discussions at home. In reality, these times developed a base from which to understand and make sense of his leadership, which encouraged me to consolidate his words through observing his work at his office, reading school documents and talking with others. Definitely his willing permission for me to spend time in his office allowed me to observe his leadership in practice.

Documents

I collected a range of documents from Shanjeebon School, which were related to change initiatives. The principal provided his full support in making available school documents for this study. Compared to many schools in Bangladesh, the activities at this school are well documented and the school is open in providing information. For instance, teacher educational qualifications, student achievement in SSC examinations and current SMC members' names were hanging on the wall in the principal's room. When the principal was talking with me about yearly goals and objectives developed by teachers, I requested the present year's documentation. He agreed to provide it instantly and asked one of his teachers to give me the soft copy of that file. Because he was willing and happy to provide any document necessary for my study with a trust of best use, I have been mindful of the need to preserve the anonymity of the institution in using the documents I collected.

Archival photos

Paton (2015, p. 606) suggests that photos as visual data are worth a thousand words. I looked particularly for photos that captured events that involved the school with the community or that signalled some kind of shift from what might be called ordinary Bangladeshi practice. Most photos were collected from the school archives. In addition, I took some photos myself that I felt were further

needed to develop richer stories about the school such as ones of the surrounding communities and the principal's room.

Nazrul, the principal, stored photos of various initiatives in his office computer as memories or to use for further documentation. So he was quite open in providing those photos. He provided me with all the photos stored in his computer.

I had not intended to collect archival photos at the beginning of my data collection. But hearing stories and gathering data of change initiatives encouraged me get some visual images that would allow readers, as Harper (2005) suggests, to better understand the context and events of this study. Due to the yearly pattern of projects in the school I had to collect photos from the archives. Some projects were on-going, and some had taken place in the past, or recurred at earlier time of the year. For the latter I had no opportunity to take fresh snapshots for my study. Although I had chances to take photos of some ongoing programmes such as the students cluster committee, some programmes that happen yearly at particular times, such as tree plantation, did not allow me to get fresh photos as they occurred outside the timeline of my data collection.

Research diary

As Patton (2015) suggests I used a diary for my research in several ways: keeping notes on my own responses during an interview; in taking observational notes; and in writing a reflective journal.

As I mentioned, my position in interviews and professional dialogues was a listener unless the flow of talking went off track. I recorded my own responses in the diary to remind me to follow up on aspects later rather than interrupting the informant during talking.

I spent most of my time in the school in the principal's room to observe his leadership, and consequently many of my journal entries are notes about what occurred during his working day. A significant reason for staying in his room was that it allowed me to observe his communication with teachers and students, and his dealings with parents and community people. His willingness, without hesitation, to have me in his office while he continued to work encouraged me to take that opportunity. Observing his decision making and dealing with a range of situations gave me deeper understanding of his leadership. One such example is how he dealt with a mother who came to get permission for her daughter to sit the SSC examination:

Mother: Assalam Alaikum. May I come in, Sir?

Nazrul: Olaikum Assalam. Yes please.

Mother: Sir, my daughter could not come to school for last one month. I am here to request you to permit her to sit for test examination (a requisite for SSC examination).

Nazrul: Why was your daughter absent for a long time?

Mother: Because she got married and was not possible to attend classes.

Nazrul: I cannot allow her to sit for test examination due to school regulation. Please prepare her for next year examination, or she can continue her family life leaving school.

I had not quite expected this from Nazrul as I seen him as a leader of learning. When the mother left his room, I wanted to know the reasons for taking the decision of 'no'. He replied in an interesting way, saying that there are two sides to this decision. First, from a humanitarian view, he should accept that girl to sit the examination, but he did not. Second, to maintain the rules that he set in this

school and to continue the pace of achievement, he had to refuse the request, which he did. He knew the girl and that she was actually not able to pass the test examination. Then why should he break his regulation? But he was prepared to take her on at school without paying tuition fees and to sit for the examination next year.

At a surface level the decision did not seem right to me. But our later discussion indicated the complexities he has to consider in decision-making and leadership of the school. He had to care about his overall school achievement and his regulations as well as the girl's real progress rather than simply giving in to a request. In this incident, his leadership indicated his strategic positioning in running the school.

Following the suggestions of Janesick (1999), I sometimes used the diary to write down my reflections about events that took place, my reflections about leadership, even descriptions of facilities in the school. I noted how teachers, students, parents, SMC members and community people shared various issues with the principal. It was quite interesting to me to see how teachers relied on advice on personal matters from the principal; that seemed to me to be a signpost of trust relationship between them. As I wrote in my diary:

The principal was seated on his chair. One teacher came to discuss something with him. The teacher asked for his suggestion regarding buying a flat from his brother. The principal appreciated the family nature of the transaction but suggested he should do it formally. He said, "sometimes people do it in a verbal way without any formal document and then often their future generations face problem with the ownership". So he advised him strongly to do the registration.

There was a look of trust and belief in the teacher's face. Why does the teacher rely on his principal? Can I consider it as an indication of trust relationship?

So the research diary was quite an important tool in my data collection. It nourished my data in terms of observation, self-reflection and cross matching of what the principal was discussing and how he was practicing.

Ethical considerations

Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 22) stress the importance of “developing situational and trans-situational ethics that apply to all forms of the research act”. A formal aspect of ensuring the rights of participants involved gaining ethical approval from the University of Canterbury Educational Research Human Ethics Committee (ERHEC) prior to data collection. All relevant documents such as the information sheet and consent forms for all participants had to be submitted to the committee to be reviewed and I received the ethical approval on 21 March 2013.

Written permission from the participants was collected. Prior to their permission, an information letter and consent sheet were given to each participant. In the information sheet, I provided the purpose of the study, the areas of focus, data collection methods, how the findings will be used, participant’s rights, and I gave them time to decide about their involvement in the research. Copies of their permission are kept as a record of their approval. Samples of consent forms are included in Appendix: 3-6.

All the participants allowed me to use their names in reporting. But at a stage of collecting data, I again raised the issue of using names and the possibility of even minimal risk to the principal. We then both agreed to disclose the facts but not to use actual names. Thus, any names used in this study are pseudonyms, given to respect participants’ rights to anonymity and protection.

Another issue that had to be solved was using photos. Though I had permission from the principal to use any photo provided, I still wanted to assure there would be no risk. The photos used, where necessary, have been edited in such a

way that the context or participants cannot be identified. This strategy gave me the opportunity to provide substantial material for this study and still preserve participants' rights of anonymity.

Beyond these formal procedures, ethical responsibility demands that I actively seek to be truthful in reporting participants' accounts and my own observations. This consideration underlies my approach in analysing and reporting the information I gathered.

Analysing data

Qualitative research advises for a simultaneous process of data collection and analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Stake, 2005). In analysing data I used the following strategies.

Deconstructive listening

Analysis for my data began at the initial stage of data collection. In the first stage I listened to each recording of the discussion with the principal several times to develop my understanding of his approach to leadership. To some extent I sought to align what he said with theory in the literature but I was aware that the literature was predominantly western and so written about different contexts and different challenges. His focus in describing the changes he worked for and his pointing out of dilemmas led to my increasing understanding of the complexities in his leadership of the school. My growing understanding provoked me to discuss more and observe further. In addition, the listening also developed clearer understanding about the focal points to follow up in interviews with others.

On reflection, after conducting all the interviews and participating in the professional dialogues, listening was the most significant tool in processing such a large volume of data. Repeated listening shaped my thinking to identify the parts of the interviews and professional dialogues that were important for the

focus of my study. Any comment that might help to answer the research questions was identified and marked with an indication of time. (For instance, dialogue with Nazrul, date 01 September 2013, Session-2, 16:20 - 17:47). This process allowed me to comprehend the collected data and to reduce the pressure of transcribing an unnecessary volume of data.

Transcribing and translating

I transcribed only the interviews and dialogues that I considered relevant for my research.

Because all the interviews and dialogues were conducted in Bangla, the mother language of both interviewer and interviewees, I had to take some measures in translating them into English. In translating two issues were important to consider: meaning and accuracy. I tried to deal with those issues in multiple ways. First, I sent a sample of translated passages for checking to two Bangladeshi colleagues who are pursuing their doctoral study in other topics at my university. Second, I also sent a sample to the principal as a participant who has enough knowledge of English to understand the translation. In addition, my senior supervisor has enough knowledge of Bangla and Bangladeshi culture to advise me on how to translate to capture the meaning of concepts so they are not lost in the shift from Bangla to English. All those to whom I sent sample translations sent back positive feedback on my translation. They suggested that in minor cases I should change a word to one that would make more sense in English without changing the Bangla meaning. It was a relief for me because Esposito (2001) argues that translating the transcription is often considered an issue in conducting qualitative research in different languages.

Trustworthiness of data

Data in qualitative studies is subjective (Stake, 2005, 2010). Collecting and reporting qualitative data, carries the likelihood of gathering unnecessary data and misinterpretation due to the lack of clarity of researcher's own perceptions

(Stake, 2005). To strengthen my own understanding about the processes of leading change in a school and to develop a clearer sense of what was valuable data, I drew on my own knowledge of Bangladeshi schooling and social culture as well as reading both of these against the theoretical literature. The literature I reviewed is discussed in Chapter Three. I drew on the learning community of doctoral students (Greenwood, Alam, Salahuddin, & Rasheed, 2015) that has developed in my college to test my emergent understandings. Since this group included a number of other Bangladeshi educators, their feedback prompted continual refinement of my thinking.

I also talked through the data I was collecting with a wide range of the participants in my study so I could see it through various lenses. For example, I was able to observe the principal actually at work in his office as well as talking to him, and that confirmed the credibility of his words since what he said was reflected in management, decision-making, negotiation and networking. Moreover, the school documents I collected served as supporting materials for the accounts of what happened in previous times.

I communicated with the principal throughout my journey in analysing and reporting so that I did not misinterpret data. Any issue I felt less than confident to interpret, I went back to the principal for further explanation and to refine my understanding. His quick responses in email or telephone consultation allowed me to report his words and actions in an authentic way.

Eliciting feedback from all participants, and especially the principal, is an important feature of my research I shared sections of my data with several teacher participants before I left the site, and I sent the Chapter Five 'Principal as Leader' to Nazrul to look through after completing my first draft. His positive feedback allowed me to continue with confidence.

Tentative categories and emergent focus

I was reluctant to decide on categories too early in my investigation because my research approach demanded an open mind in the early stages. Rather than predicting and looking at established characteristics of leadership required for school change, I wanted to use my research to discover those features.

However, thematic categories began to emerge. Initially my list of categories was long and the scope of the material I wanted to deal with was more extensive than what is presented in this report. During the analytic and interpretive process I gradually refined and reduced the thematic categories that seemed most relevant to present the creative aspects of leadership for change and improvement in Shanjeebon School. For instance, initially 'building trust relationships' and 'leadership for learning' emerged as themes that I found later as embedded in other themes in my research. Finally, the themes ended with the four main categories presented in this report.

Presentation

During the period of analysis and initial drafts of writing, I realised that it was important to reconstruct the practice, culture and complexity of leadership in the school, as well as to comment on their significance to give readers a clear understanding of the events I describe. Considering Janesick's (2003) statement, "the researcher must find the most effective way to tell the story and to convince the audience of the meaning of the study" (p. 63), I decided to utilise narrative story telling in my final presentation.

The significant reason in choosing this style is "narrative is meaning making through the shaping or ordering of experience" (Chase, 2011, p. 430). Narrative gave me the freedom to interpret and present principal's action and experience as a whole in a meaningful way.

Because the Bangladeshi school leadership issues I discuss are contextually embedded (Stake, 2005) and likely to be foreign to many readers, I included a detailed context chapter to situate the account in a specific context.

Because schools in Bangladesh have sole leadership and change initiatives are mainly taken by principals who engage teachers, students, parents and community members to develop and implement changes, I have written a chapter on principal leadership for reform in Shanjeebon School first. Then I have developed three other chapters on teacher leadership, student engagement and school-community partnership, as these provide extensions of the leadership of the principal. As the initiator and leader of the changes, the principal's voice is dominant in all chapters while other respondent voices have been used to support or to challenge his ideas.

Description of leadership practices is inevitably subjective. A qualitative researcher plays dual roles in reporting data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2015). I consciously allowed my voice to be evident in reporting this study, and to be evident in the challenge of representing others' voices truthfully.

Language

It was a constant challenge for me to select language that could correctly describe the conceptual understanding that arose out of exploration of leadership in a school in a non-native English-speaking context. I am aware that terminology used to describe western contexts may not fit this school. Patton (2015, p. 572) argues that "language matters to people" and so a researcher needs to be careful in negotiating choices in using language. My approach was to write for Bangladesh and other international readers as well as for academia.

I have chosen a number of strategies for using language. I have used some Bangla words throughout my writing. In pseudonyms, I deliberately used Bangla words that bear significant meanings. For instance, it took me long time to get a

meaningful name for the school. I tried to find a word that sounds like a school name and suggests the characteristics of the school. Since the school is different in terms of teaching and learning and in seeking innovative strategies to engage students making them creative and changing their way of life, a word was needed to express all those concepts. At first I selected a word '*Adarsha*' which means 'ideal'. I did not continue with that word since the school is still changing and progressing. If the school were ideal, then there would be little to do for further development. Therefore, after considering several names, I selected the name 'Shanjeebon'. The meaning of Shanjeebon of bringing or giving new life ties in with the practices and goals of this school that works to change students and to develop a brighter future for them.

I also want to justify the choice of 'Nazrul' as the pseudonym for the principal. This is a common Bangla name, but the reason I chose it is beyond popularity. I tried to find a name in Bangla linking to a person who had a memorable life story and did great works for society, culture and country. My study mostly represents the creativity and innovative ideas of a school leader whose own life was struggle throughout his study at school and afterwards. He is not only changing the culture in a school, he is working for the community, in preserving culture and social equity. He is a 'manipulator' in providing new lives for his students. Nazrul, the national poet of Bangladesh, seemed to be a significant pseudonym for him. Though he is not writing poems, other characteristics of that poet suit the personality of this principal.

All the Bangla words I have used in this writing are specified by the use of italics. To make these words easily understandable for readers, I give either a synonym in English or an explanation of the word.

Accountability

I was given a bed cover sheet set as a gift from the principal just before leaving Bangladesh. It was significant to me in terms of relationship, trust and

accountability. Rather than counting the gift as nice and expected, I recognise it as the reciprocity of friendship, love and trust between a researcher and participant. After coming back to New Zealand with the data I collected, while I was busy analysing the material and finding emerging themes, I read an academic colleague's account (Greenwood, 1999) of a gift she had received from her participants. It reminds her of her obligation as a researcher to honour the voices of her participants. The bedcover gift serves the same purpose for me and it also reminds me to acknowledge my own emotional and conceptual engagement in the work.

Chapter Five

Principal as Leader

When I walked into the principal's room I was surprised. I first noticed the principal's smiling face and felt the warmth of his handshake. He seemed more openly welcoming than other men in authority I have met. Then I saw his clothes; he was wearing an open-necked shirt and tailored shorts. That struck me as being unusually informal and yet practical. Then I looked around the room; it was unexpectedly big and quite plain, with a large number of chairs clustered in various ways. There were two ceiling fans and I looked around for the air conditioning unit but there was not one in the room. A number of charts hung on the walls with a record of public examination results, certificate of achievements, and a list of teachers and their qualifications.

The principal waved me to a chair and sat down in his own. While his chair was in a central position it seemed a lot less imposing than those used by other principals. It looked practical rather than important. There was a computer and printer on his side desk and a photocopier to the side. The room felt warm, perhaps 35 ° C. We started to talk about the research project I had planned.

I describe my first impressions of the man and his room in detail because they seem to typify his open personality and his unconventional approach to his work. I describe some of these characteristics in more detail in this chapter.

This room became the base for my research study. I often talked to the principal there; I joined his meetings with other staff there and observed his meetings with parents and community members.



Photo 1: Principal office

This man is Nazrul, the principal of Shanjeebon School. As I found over the next weeks, his style of leadership is different from that in many Bangladeshi schools. As well as attending to administration and management, Nazrul articulates a strong vision, works to engage and motivate others in working for the improvement of practice in the school, and develops adventurous strategies to create the changes he planned.

In this chapter, I describe the complexities of leading a school towards improvement and change, primarily from the principal's perspective. He has a wider vision of leadership than merely management or administration. The chapter includes discussion about the contextual, social and political challenges that were important during the planning and implementation of the changes that Nazrul made in his school. Later in the chapter I relate aspects of his vision and practice to concepts of leadership from international literature and conclude with a summary of personal qualities and skills that make this principal an ground-breaking leader as well as a competent manager and administrator.

The figure below represents the framework within which the factors related to school change are examined in this chapter:

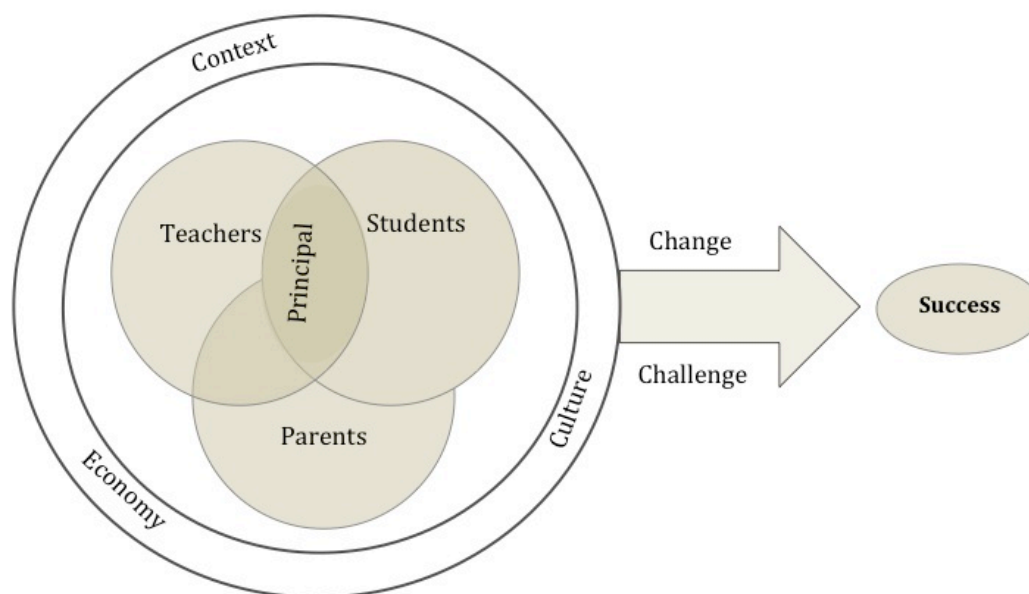


Figure 2: Framework of school leadership for change

Stepping in to the school

Initial meetings and observations

I began my data collection in June 2013. I knew the location of the school but I had never been there. At the main gate I asked the gatekeeper whether the principal was available. He did not query me about whether I had an appointment or not; he pointed to the principal's room and let me know that principal was available there. That experience differed from what I have experienced during my previous study of principals in Bangladeshi secondary schools in terms of bureaucracy and waiting a long time to meet a principal. Here the direct access immediately raised questions in my mind. Can anybody meet the principal at anytime or was the gatekeeper informed that I was coming? Is there any timeframe for meeting outsiders? I soon learnt the answers to these questions.

I easily found the principal's room with a nameplate in Bangla '*Addhakkho*' (principal). I sought his permission to come in and after hearing my voice he just looked up at me. Then with a big smiling face he stepped forward and said with a very cordial voice "*ashen, ashen*" (come in, come in). After a strong handshake we hugged each other and he offered me a seat in front of him. His office is relatively bigger than many other principals' offices in Bangladesh. Even the renowned school principals that I had previously visited in Dhaka city did not have such large rooms. I wondered why the principal had chosen such a room. There were two types of chairs in his room; five relatively big chairs surrounded his desk and more than twenty chairs were available along two walls. There was also a small sofa to the left. At first I did not understand the use of this large seating arrangement but in the following days I spent time in the school grounds as part of my observations, especially in the principal's room, which provided insight into the use of this room.

Meeting with teachers

On the very first day of data collection, the principal called the teachers, who were available, to his room to introduce me. I immediately could see the use of the large room and other uses became clear as he talked about his vision and his work. The teachers work in two shifts, so there were twenty at this first meeting. The principal introduced me as a researcher, friend and younger brother. He asked them to help me without hesitation so that I could do my research and feel welcome at their school. He made it clear that he expected that they would be open to answer any questions about their school or teaching and learning.



Photo 2: Induction with teachers

The principal chose the break time between shifts for this induction so that it did not hamper classwork. The induction lasted around fifteen minutes. I wondered why Nazrul called his teachers to the principal's room rather than introducing me in the teachers' common room. Was it related to his position as principal or did he want to make the meeting more formal? Later I arrived at the decision that he wanted it formal, perhaps for two reasons: to place me in a respectful position and in getting an easy option of having tea all together which would require time to organise in the teachers common room.

Observations of the surroundings: Why are artefacts important?

On the walls of his room there was a photograph of the founder of this school; names of the current SMC members; lists of results in public examinations; lists of teachers' names and qualifications; a list of principals' names since school was established along with their qualifications. There were photographs of prize giving ceremonies and significant cultural functions with honourable people from society or the nation in attendance. I asked Nazrul how the artefacts on the walls helped him in leading his school.

These boards contain essential information about my school. Any visitors in my room can get an overall idea about the school easily. I do not need to show them by opening record books. Nothing is secret: school achievement, teachers' qualifications and the School Managing Committee are open for all to see.

While he was talking about the boards hanging on the walls, I was sweating due to a hot and humid weather, which is quite usual in summer in Bangladesh. The two ceiling fans were running at full speed. I asked him whether he had thought about an air conditioner for his room or not.

The SMC offered me an air conditioner in my room. It could benefit me but not my wider community. When my teachers, students and parents are in non-air-conditioned rooms and feel the heat, how can I sit in an air-conditioned room? That might separate me from them, and would block me from developing a good relationship.

This answer indicates that he sees himself as connected to his teachers, students, parents and community and that he wants to demonstrate that.

I noticed a desktop computer near his table and a television in one corner of the room. These indicate his familiarity with modern technology. This is interesting since many principals have been reported to be not interested in modern technology and perceive electronic devices negatively (Khan, 2014). Nazrul told me that he stores many records in this computer, including files and pictures. It helps him to manage his records, making them easily accessible and providing a back-up copy. There was a pre-paid Internet connection associated with his desktop. There was also a printer. He thinks his computer has made work easier, saves time and is beneficial for his school. I observed these benefits when he printed out and gave me the list of teachers and photographs of various programmes.

The television was behind a colourful dividing screen. I rarely observed him turn on the television, except for when there was an important issue in the national or international news. As he had Sky channels, he sometimes watched international news on BBC and CNN. He surprised me by calling me in Dhaka to ask about my wife in New Zealand, as there had been an earthquake in Wellington. I wanted to know how he knew about that. He told me that there was news on television.

Nazrul has made strategic use of space in his large room, changing aspects of them. For example, he used a colourful cloth screen to create a hallway to the toilet and filled the hallway with a photocopier, two big file cabinets as well as a snack table. The principal has many guests everyday and he likes to entertain them with at least a cup of tea, so a snack table is necessary. I asked why he had the photocopier in his room rather than in an office worker's room.

There are two reasons: to control misuse and to maintain confidentiality. When a photocopy is needed teachers ask me for permission so they cannot use the photocopier except for schoolwork. Besides, all examination questions are developed, copied and filed up in my room to be preserved in a locker. So I feel safe that we are maintaining the confidentiality of examination questions as the questions are photocopied in front of my eyes.

While one might consider the principal's management of the photocopier and printer as centralisation of power or micromanagement of his staff, there is a practical need to manage expenditure and to safeguard against cheating. Because school students are largely from poor and lower income families, there is need to conserve and be seen to conserve the school's resources. There are known instances in Bangladesh of teachers giving away or selling examination questions so he needs to prevent the possibility of such practices. Both cautions are important for maintaining the school's reputation.

Establishment and history of the school

According to the vice-principal, Ointika, who was a founder teacher in this school, this school was started initially with donations from the community, and teachers did not receive any salaries from school funds. Ointika explained how the school began.

We started this school with five founder teachers. We had a small number of students and teachers at the beginning. This area was lower status in terms of education, economy and community. So the welfare-minded people decided to establish a school here for development of

the community. But it was a challenge for us to get students into a new school. We could not receive any salaries for the first six months.

I have described the process by which schools are initially started by local benefactors more fully in Chapter Two. Although many schools in Bangladesh begin their journey in this way, all schools do not progress at a similar pace. Over time, Shanjeebon School has developed a strong financial status through multiple developments. Now teachers receive additional salary from school funds in addition to the government payments. Some non-registered teachers receive salaries from school funds. The income sources for this school are student tuition fees, government benefits for registered teachers and monthly rent from small shops on the ground floor of one emporium.



Photo 3: Shops in school emporium

The sources were established several years prior to this principal joining the school. Since this principal was appointed, the number of students has increased every year and that has increased the income from tuition fees. But a large amount of this money is expended on teacher salaries. Along with tuition fees, the school receives a development fee every year from all students to improve the facilities in the school. The school also has a fixed deposit in a bank and gets an income from the interest. According to Nazrul, the school does not have any financial problems, since it now can operate within its income.

We prepare a budget at the beginning of every year. We calculate our estimated income and expenses for a year. It is not perfect though. We

calculate our income according to student numbers. Teachers' salaries and bonuses are the main expenses. As well I make another budget for the development fund to plan the development work for a year. We take a development fee from each student during admission every year. So we can calculate at the beginning of the year how much money has come to development fund and how much we can spend. The budget varies but it works like a guideline. After that, we have some expenses to buy stationery for school.

It is clear that the principal is attentive to the school income and expenditure. Nazrul is able to strategically prepare and manage his budget so that he can run the operations of the school and use the boosted school funds for longer-term school development. But in a context where many families have low incomes there are challenges when there is unforeseen reduced income from tuition fees.

Considering the context

The principal has to take active account of this contextual reality so he can encourage students to continue their study and engage parents in the school. According to Nazrul, he sets affordable tuition fees every year after discussion with parents at meetings so they can plan for the school costs. But students are from families with a range of income and these fees can still be unaffordable for some of the poorest students. There are scholarships students can apply for each year. An evaluation committee selects the successful recipients. Nazrul explained:

Some students are from poor families and do not have the ability to pay tuition fees. But I do not want that they should leave school because of financial crises. To allow these students to continue, we call for scholarship applications every year. We provide more than a hundred tuition fee scholarships in categories such as full free and half free.



Photo 4: Community surrounding the school

Sometimes students from a wealthy families who have lost their or his father, the main earning member of the family, may be in a miserable position and feel embarrassed to tell the school that they unable to pay the tuition fees. These students tend to attend their classes irregularly and appear to neglect the importance of their study. In many cases their academic performances suffers, perhaps because they work to earn money for the family. When the class teacher or principal notices students are missing classes or not doing homework, the principal invites parents to his office and tries to understand the situation through discussion. I observed a discussion where the principal talked to one student's mother, after the loss of the father, and suggested she should apply for a scholarship to waive tuition fees.

It seems that the principal has developed a goal-oriented budget to enable the school to create and sustain fees scholarships without impinging on the school's capacity to provide teaching resources. As I walked through the school I saw a well-used library, a computer lab, a science lab, spaces for extra-curricular activities and other teaching resources that are at least comparable to those in schools I had visited in richer urban areas.

Bahadur, the joint convener of the guardian forum, strongly endorsed the principal for his financial development of the school. He explained, "This principal raised the school fund from 2.2 million to more than 10 million." This

fund allows Nazrul to be flexible in providing tuition for needy families and to develop further physical resources. With improved funding he was able to start a new building for a newly approved college section. Nazrul explained how most of the finance for the new building construction has been sourced from their school development fund.

For this construction we got funding from the government to build the foundation and ground floor for a three-storied building. We added money to make the foundation for a six-storied building. Now the second and third floors have been built through our school development fund.

The finance of the school fund came from the combined efforts of community SMC as well the principal. The way the principal has developed a good relationship between the school and its community has been instrumental in building the school's financial capacity.

Building relationships: ease of access to the principal

From the beginning, I observed the easy access to the principal's room for all in the school community. This ease of access is consistent with attitudes I observed later: deep trust; responsibility for making a difference; and love from the core of his heart. I discuss more fully how the principal has developed these relationships with parents and community in Chapter Eight. Here I offer examples I recorded of how he enabled easy access of social leaders to his room.

I was seated in the principal's room and he was busy with his routine job. One candidate for the city council election and his supporters from a political party came and urged him to support them. The principal talked to them and assured that he would do whatever he can do for them. He was very friendly when talking to them. He entertained them with tea and light snacks.

-Field journal, 28 June 2013

A reporter from a local newspaper came to the principal's room and talked about the school. He was interested to know about the recent success of school so that he can report it in his newspaper.

-Field journal, 23 July 2013

The people who come to meet him in the school are not always desired visitors. Some of them are involved in political parties but there are people in the community who may object to him being seen as favouring one party or another. When I asked the principal why he gave time to politicians and reporters, he replied that he needs to be welcoming to all influential people for the sake of the school's well-being. He added that he also tries to avoid making explicit commitment to any of the political policies they might advocate.

Nazrul described how in the past the school was known as an institution of lawbreakers because many of its ex-students often created social and political disturbances, including the use of guns.

When I joined this school, I heard that Shanjeebon School is a factory to produce '*Mastan*' (criminals). Some of the students who graduated from here were involved in many illegal activities, as this is a market area. There are records that they walked with guns openly after sunset. They were involved in fighting each other and were sometimes sent to jail.

Nazrul explained how he had initiated a program to support the rehabilitation of those graduates. He formed an organisation involving the community. This organisation established a library and collected books from the community so that they could provide further opportunities for former students to read and learn more. He regularly met with them in the library and discussed social responsibilities for their personal development. He involved them with the school because he believes they can be a strength for school development. Over time he successfully engaged them with the school and in society in a positive way. Now they help the school in a range of ways. They even protect current students in the street, especially girl students who face problems on the way to

school such the form of sexual harassment that is socially known as '*Eve teasing*' (street harassment or molestation of women by men). So this principal's leadership is not restricted to the school campus, because he knows the importance of working for the greater social community.

After joining I formed an organisation of former students. We established a library and collected books from the community. I support them at all times. I invite them in to various programmes held in the school. I give them some responsibilities. I talk with them and help them value themselves as citizens. So the environment has changed and now there is social recognition that Shanjeebon School produces good citizens.

Nazrul was disappointed that he is personally not able to continue with this organisation.

I am happy that I was able to develop many of these young people as good human beings through that organisation. Unfortunately the local politicians started to capture it as they can use the members who had already developed a good reputation in the society. Then I had to distance myself from that organisation. But these young boys were already connected to school and society, and still they are, in a positive way.

The principal spends considerable time supporting the wellbeing of ex-students of Shanjeebon School. Other principals often indicate that they lack time for their regular job so how does Nazrul manage to allocate his time in this way? Nazrul explained that, "though it costs time, it has benefits for school such as getting their hands into school development", so he recognises it as a strategic priority both for improving the reputation of the school and for creating better role models for current students.

Along with members of the wider community, parents have easy access to the principal's room. His door is open for parents at any time when he is available and parents do not need to make prior appointments. During my observations, he never turned away a parent who came to see him. Even if he were in a meeting, he allowed the visitors into his room and asked them to have a seat,

further away from his desk where he was conducting the meeting. Considering the high number of students at this school, the total number of parents in this school is about 7000. He explained why he takes the open door approach.

When I joined this school, the appointment time for parents was only two hours in a day such as 11am-12pm and 3pm-4pm. I wiped out the meeting time notification. When I am present in school, parents are allowed to meet me. My door is open for them. If they are bound to meet in a certain time, how they can do their other job? This is my duty to serve them.

Of course the principal has administration duties and formal meetings. I asked him what he does when he is attending a SMC meeting? What does he do if the Education Secretary is meeting with him in his room? He said, "It is not possible to meet parents at those times and I ask them to wait for a certain time or if they are in hurry then to come back again at a convenient time".

Nazrul also realises the importance of building relationships with teachers for creating effective change in his school. He considers his role as a leader of the school and at the same time as a manager. As a leader, he motivates teachers to engage more in their work; as a manager he often takes action against those who do not do their job properly. He admitted that in some cases, teachers might initially resent him using his power to make them accountable but after showing them the results of their positive efforts, he believes he is developing trustful relationships with his staff. He indicated that trust is built on mutual honesty rather than on blind approval. He affirmed that building such trustful relationships is a priority for him, and he believes that overall there is a friendly atmosphere in the school. He knows that without developing positive relationships, he could not expect the changes he introduced to be effective.

We try to maintain a good relationship among us - the teachers and me as principal. If I don't develop strong working relationships, I could not implement the change initiatives and the expected outcome would not eventuate.

He understands that relationships grow from both sides in a school. The principal, if interested, works to develop good relations to engage teachers more. Teachers, if motivated, also want to be effective in their work and so need guidance from the principal along with being dependent on him for some things, for instance for annual accreditation reports. So both parties try to maintain good relationships. Nazrul believes that if relationships lack trust, initiatives can have little impact on school change. He said that, "In building relationships with teachers, trust is stronger than administration". Building a trust relationship is not easy, as is pointed out by researchers (Fullan, 2001a; Harris 2002; Robinson et al., 2009). I will discuss the details in this process further in Chapter Six. Being conscious of the complexity in building relationships, Nazrul always tries to be aware of problems as they surface, "If sometimes, anything unexpected happens in our relationships, I try to understand why?"

He is also focused on engaging students in the school. From his own experience, he knows how difficult it is for teachers to manage large classes and to engage students effectively in learning. He knows that without student engagement in learning, the school cannot achieve its goals. He uses an analogy; that he thinks of teachers as being the root of the tree that is the school, and that students are the flowers of the tree. If the flowers do not bloom properly, they cannot pass on their fragrance to society. So students need to be nurtured effectively to develop them as well-rounded people. Nazrul firmly asserted, "Without considering the students as the centre point, how can we think of school development?" He is focused on developing students from the beginning by engaging them in class and out of class. He tries to engage them in extra-curricular activities and to get them to participate in some social work as well. I have discussed these strategies in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Nazrul seems successful in leading according to his goals. Overcoming challenges has been an important part of the change process towards that end. These challenges are discussed in the next section.

Bureaucratic, social, political and religious challenges

Tensions between the school and SMC

The way the principal works has challenged some SMC members because it compromises their power. From the beginning of his appointment, Nazrul actively sought to reform the practices of the school. Although a current SMC member, Zakir, admitted Nazrul's skills and effectiveness in leading the school as, "Our principal is a skilled person. He executes his power effectively to run the administration for learning and maintains school discipline very well", but developing such confidence took a long time.

One significant issue was to ensure that academic decisions would be made by the principal and the teachers rather than by the SMC. Nazrul explained, "At that time the decision makers were the SMC members and that was one of the main barriers. The SMC had a strong involvement in academic decision-making which is not their job and that prevented school success". Nazrul looked for ways to overcome this challenge. He met with the SMC to discuss this issue then put the challenge to them.

Academic decisions are mine, I told them. You will give me suggestions only if I seek suggestions from you. I want full freedom in this sector. If you create any barriers, it is not possible to reach the goals. That was a challenge for me and I was able to overcome that challenge. They finally gave me freedom in academic decision-making. But I did not get the freedom I asked for at that time.

The principal did not get this freedom for decision making easily. He had to address resistance, as he did for many other changes. It was a long and slow process. At first he tried to convince the SMC chairman as the top person of decision-making board. Though the chairman, a founder of the school, was pleased to hear about his vision for the school, he suggested that Nazrul should discuss it with the vice-chairman first.

It seems that the chairman was convinced but was not yet confident in the principal, as Nazrul was new in the position. His instruction to discuss everything with the vice-chairman gave Nazrul a further challenge because the vice-chairman, an illiterate man, used to comment in every discussion whether he understood it or not. The vice-chairman was easily swayed by others including members of the SMC and people in the community. It was difficult for him to hand over his power to the principal as he was used to having decision-making power for a long time.

The SMC members found it alarming to lose some of their power. What was involved was not only a matter of making decisions, it also related to potential loss of sources of illegal income. Such income can be in the form of payback from publishers for book selection, from teachers who hope for recruitment and from contractors wanting contracts for refurbishing physical facilities.

The principal started the reformation with the selection of books. In general, textbooks come from NCTB and are free for all students. But subsidiary books for each grade are selected by school authorities. Schools select books from various publishers. As a result there is competition among publishers to get their books selected by schools to raise their sales. In some cases, they look for illegal ways such as offering money to school decision-makers to get their books selected. Some members of the SMC received such payments.

Book selection for the various grades was done by the SMC who completed their school education long ago. There were unfair deals in making contracts with a specific company. If we cannot provide good books to students, how will we ensure better learning? We have to give them quality books.

To break this syndicate having control Nazrul had to challenge these existing practices and develop new strategies. According to him, teachers know better what they require for teaching and what is available in books so teachers should select the books. He changed the process so that teachers could select the books. I discuss how he did this in detail in Chapter Six. Through the book selection

process Nazrul started breaking down the predominant culture where most of the power in academic decision-making resided with the SMC. The next challenge Nazrul gave to the SMC was about the recruitment of teachers.

Recruitment issue

Some SMC members wanted to retain their power in decision-making about teacher recruitment. They appeared to disregard rules and regulations. But the principal firmly upheld recruiting regulations and finding the best candidates for his school, rather than doing favours for friends or family members of the SMC.

If I wanted to recruit teachers, the SMC would just tell me that I did not need to advertise for that. Some of them would say they would give me a teacher. The number of candidates often is more than what I need. But these types of candidates would not serve my school purpose. The SMC members do this either for their relatives or for other concealed reasons.

To overcome this situation, the principal talked to the SMC chairman about the necessity for fair selection processes, especially for teaching positions. Nazrul recalled how he had said, “teachers are roots of the tree ‘school’ and if the roots are weak then a tree cannot grow well”. So he requested the SMC chairman to be firm and fair in teacher selection. According to Nazrul, the chairman was convinced. Although Nazrul was able to convince the chairman, some members who had personal interests in recruitment were afraid of losing their benefits. According to law, there are representatives from the SMC in all recruitment, together with other representatives from government authorities. SMC members are often community and political leaders so they have influential connections with people. Sometimes they allow illegal processes so their family members and relatives can gain positions, and sometimes candidates for teaching positions request a favour. SMC members who tend to be more self-interested and less concerned about school development, can create pressures within the recruitment process. Nazrul said,

The requests that came when I was recruiting new teachers were for relatives to be employed, like a younger sister for one member, sister-in-law for another, one's niece and one's wife. It was very *piradayak* (embarrassing) for me. They did not try to understand the situation.

For example, a teacher of commerce was needed. When Nazrul discussed the position in a SMC meeting, one committee member put forward his wife as suitable for the position. Nazrul told him that the position was not suitable for her because she lacked the required academic qualifications so could not fulfil the school's purpose but still the member insisted that she be appointed to that position.

I needed a teacher for commerce but she had a degree in arts. It was a vacant position, which required a B.Ed degree, but she did not have one. She also needed teaching registration, but she did not have this either. Another factor, to be a teacher, a third division pass is accepted once within a Bachelor degree, but she was third class throughout her degree. I informed him that his wife was unsuitable for the position due to those reasons, but he did not understand. He claimed that the principal can do anything if he wants.

That SMC member was involved in one of the big political parties in Bangladesh, and held a secretary position at the district level. In many cases such people use their political power illegally and for self-interest. They show little concern for the law and some have even used guns to get what they want. As a result, the principal's life was threatened because he did not recruit the SMC member's wife.

My life was at risk because they were influential people in that area. Still they are influential. It was tough to challenge them when I work within their boundaries and it was not good for me. Once his people showed guns to me on the road when I was leaving school to go home and threatened me that if I did not ensure the teaching job, my life would be at risk.

The followers also threatened the lead teachers, telling them to go along with what they demanded. It was scary for teachers since resisting the SMC could

create personal and professional risk. The principal was worried about the teachers as well.

He made my teachers *jimmy* [hostage] and threatened them that they have to work according to his word if they want to continue in this school. He was the district secretary of the ruling party and many bad boys were involved with him.

Despite such a threat to his life, the principal did not stop his reform and reorganisation. Why was he so devoted to school development? What if he or his teachers had been attacked or lost their life for the school? How did he overcome the negativities of this situation? These are crucial questions for many principals in the Bangladesh context.

Since Nazrul did not comply with their directives to serve their purpose, the SMC started to resist him. They began to look for ways to remove him from the school.

The SMC members started to dislike me. At one time they wanted to recruit a new principal because I did not follow their instructions and their purpose was not served. So their target was for me to leave the school, and they took up the initiative. They arranged an SMC meeting on that issue.

In the meeting the SMC blamed the principal for a decrease in school results. Though the school's examination results had a very positive trend at that time, the SMC claimed that the results were better previously. Nazrul provided documentation to counter their claims.

In my presence, as I am secretary of the SMC, they accused me of decreased results in the school during my time. I asked them to make their points visible: where were the results going down? In earlier days the total number of examinees was 103 where as at present that time it was 226. The pass rate before my joining was less than 80%, and now it was 98%. It was three year after my joining. When they made the claim against me in 2007, the pass rate was very good 98.77%. Total of GPA-5, the highest grade, was 51, which was a record number for that time. In the previous year, the number of GPA-5 was 12.

When they could not prove this claim, they questioned his recruitment as a principal. They alleged that the principal was not in the first position in his recruitment examination, and that the SMC chairman recruited him by superseding numbers one to five, as his position was sixth. So they claimed he was recruited in an illegal way. Nazrul knew about his position very well since he kept all records as part of his accountability as the principal of the school. He was in the first position with excellent marks and all documents were available in his file.

When they challenged my position, I told them that I was not a member of the selection committee. I said we should see what the papers say. When they went through the file, it was clear there that I stood first in both written and viva tests. I got six marks more than the person in the second position. And the members who put the claim against me had signed their names on the papers as SMC members at that time, and dated it. All the board members had signed the decision and my examination paper is still well preserved.

The SMC also tried to use teachers to work against Nazrul. They offered certain teachers higher positions in consequent vacancies, such as for the role of vice-principal. Some teachers were influenced to work against the principal. Nazrul was aware of what was happening.

The SMC members tried to motivate teachers to make them biased against me. For example they told the vice-principal that he would be principal after my termination. When the vice-principal will be principal, then someone from junior position would be vice-principal. This kind of offer was offered to some teachers. Some teachers were being influenced after hearing them.

When I was listening to these stories at his house, he told me that it had been a scary situation for him. When he walked out of his house he was conscious of the possibility of danger to him. That was a time in 2007, which was three years after his becoming the principal. These three years (2004-07) had allowed him to take some steps in administration and management in the school and to show the benefits of the changes to the broader community. The development in school

achievement was evident to many parents and they were aware of his leadership. Those parents protected the principal in this complex situation.

When the SMC made claims against me, the parents were together in supporting me. They raised their voices saying that they thought their principal is good according to their knowledge. That the school is being developed in all directions such as structural, financial, quality of teaching learning, school environment, examination results and their children skills since my joining. So they asked why are the SMC was putting such false claims against me.

Such good support from the larger community encouraged and motivated Nazrul to initiate further reforms at the school. He even initiated actions that had the potential to be seen as interfering with religious issues, and that is an arena that is often risky from both personal and professional perspectives.

Religious issues

In a traditional society, people sometimes create issues in a school from a religious standpoint that might not be significant in their community life. After being appointed, Nazrul observed that it was difficult to maintain the school uniform for girl students. Though they had a school dress, many of them wore a *borka* on top of that. One day during morning drill the principal observed that the rows of Grades Nine and Ten girl students looked like rainbows as they wore different coloured *borkas*. He felt the need to make immediate changes, as they were not complying with the school dress code and were breaking school regulations.

Of those who wore the *borka* some also used a *neka* that covers most of their face except the eyes. It was therefore difficult to identify whether they were students of the school or not. So, although they informed their parents that they were going to school, they could easily leave the school without permission to meet their friends, as nobody can identify them. Nazrul tried to resolve the problem of the absenteeism by introducing an attendance pre-requisite for sitting the preparatory examination for SSC.

I made a rule that any student cannot sit for test examination if she or he was absent for fifteen or more classes. Some girl students who used the *borka* were among those accused of being absent too often, and their parents came to me to tell that their child left home every day for school. I was sure that those girls did leave home for school but wasted their time off the campus.

The *borka* created tension for Nazrul because it enabled some girls to be absent from school. To encourage them to achieve more in their schooling, he thought a consistent dress code was essential; however he knew that preventing girls from wearing the *borka* was really challenging due to traditional religious beliefs. So the principal instigated that an apron over the school uniform should be mandatory for all girl students.



Photo 5: Apron on school uniform

Nazrul set a meeting with the SMC to discuss the issue. Although the SMC decided that *borka* was not allowed as school dress, some individual members were not convinced. They perceived the decision as involving a religious issue and convinced some parents that the new principal was trying to make the school secular. They made this claim because they were not happy with the principal due to his reforms and the ways he worked so were trying to find additional reasons to get rid of him.

However, they escalated the issue to involve nearby *imams*¹, in various mosques, and the imams joined the resistance, insisting that the principal was working against Islam. Imams often believe themselves to be soldiers to preserve Islam in a developing community like this. The resisting group made a plan to make a rally against the principal after the *Jummah*, the Friday midday prayer at the mosque. They wanted to involve all imams in that region and people who went to the mosque for prayer. Since the principal realised what was happening ahead of time, he arranged a meeting with the imam group before the rally day. He knew how he could get the imams together.

I know who is the right person to call the imam from the mosques all around our area. I went to the bazaar committee president, talked to him and convinced him why I needed to stop the wearing *borka* over the school dress. He called a meeting for all the imams at his house before Friday.

Nazrul had to read and learn a lot about Islam and to know its rule and protocols so that he could overcome that challenge. He read books on *parda* (Hijab) in Islam and also talked to some *alem* (learned people), in preparation for his discussion with the imam group.

I had to sit for a long meeting with imams on that issue. I had to face 23 imams. I asked them to please tell me in which hadith they got the picture of a *borka*, the way to wear it and a specific colour of it. So far I know the hadith for girls is to cover their sensitive body parts and to wear loose dress. I said that this apron was a *borka*, and asked why they did not see that. I asked if they would call it a *borka* if it was coloured black.

Since the girls were wearing the aprons and no girls were wearing the *borka* at the time I visited, it was clear the principal had won the imam onto his side, and carried thorough his policy on school uniform. This struggle over the replacement of the *borka* by the apron, made it clear that some people in the community opposed the principal so he needed to be intelligent to overcome

¹ An imam leads worship services in the mosque.

strong resistance, especially round social, political and religious issues. This story demonstrates Nazrul's sincerity in his work and how building relationships contributes to his ability to lead effectively in such complex situations.

Support from the larger community

Parents who are satisfied with the progress of their children, due to the strong leadership of this principal, have developed a forum to protect the school. The parent forum strongly resisted initiatives to displace him and insisted that they wanted the principal for their children's betterment and broader school success.

To resist against those claims parents formed a forum called *Ovivabok Forum* (Guardian Forum), through their initiative. This forum sent letters to respective authorities to quell confusion about the principal's leadership especially the places where the SMC had made claims against him. They clearly mentioned that if any decision was taken without any proof they were ready to resist that. The *ovivabok* forum was a big turning point for my school changes and I got huge support during a critical time.

So when the SMC called a meeting to discuss firing the principal, having all the necessary documents made him prepared and able to answer all queries against him. He was confident about his leadership of the school and the way he managed teachers, students, parents and the community.

That crisis came at a time when there was a *caretaker government* in Bangladesh. The caretaker government was Army-backed and started a battle against corruption in the country. They took prompt action if there was any claim about corruption. The SMC made a last attempt to remove the principal from their school. They put an objection against the principal to the Army authority and received quick action. But the result was unexpected. The principal described the situation when an Army officer came to his office to investigate.

When an Army officer came to school to investigate, I gave them the file with all documents and they arrested the SMC members who made the claims. I then requested the officer not to arrest them and he

honoured that request. Later the Army officer came to school along with the District Education Officer, the DEO. He sent a letter through the DEO to the Education Board to disband the current SMC since school development was hampered due to their lack of knowledge. He indicated they were like a 'cancer' for the school and requested that they be taken out of school administration. So the Board dissolved the existing SMC. I had to establish my leadership through those hard challenges.

The real issue for the principal had to acquire the freedom he needed to manage and lead the school. He had a long fight and worked through challenges to reach that point after three years. The principal had to be systematic and strategic to break through traditional ways of operating. I was curious about his professional background and wanted to know how his background had supported him to be like this.

Nazrul's personal road to leadership

The principal started his career in 1984 as a teacher at a renowned school in that region, after completion of his Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination. He was very young to begin a job but he had responsibility for helping his family. Though their family had a business, he provided the only income after his father became paralysed. It was the year when he was studying in Grade Ten. Being realistic, after two years he chose teaching as a job rather than continuing the business so that he could continue his study simultaneously. When he started teaching he had a dream that some day he would be a leader of a school. He continued teaching but the school had limited scope to promote him, as there were many more experienced teachers in that school. After a few years it was uninspiring for him to do the regular teaching job without any changes and challenges. So he looked for something new that had challenges.

In 1995 he began a job in a *buying house* in Bangladesh. In general, a buying house works as an agent for foreign buyers who are interested in buying garments from Bangladesh. So they need skilled people who are good at communicating and who can sell products internationally. Through this job, the

principal had the opportunity to work with international companies supplying garments and to work in a time-bound environment in taking and supplying orders. But to work towards his dream, he wanted to do something that improved society and people more directly.

In 2000 he started a job as a project coordinator in an international non-government organisation (NGO), *CARE Bangladesh*. He realised that he had learned a lot during the four-year career in that NGO before his job as a principal in 2004. Through that work he changed the lives of slum people by making them more aware of their rights and providing them with essential life training. He held a managerial position and his main responsibility was to work with slum people and report back changes to the higher authority. The job was challenging because he did not initially know how to deal with the people from the slums; so, in many cases he did not get a positive result from his initial initiatives. Nazrul described his experience.

I worked with slum people. During my work with slum people I faced many challenges. As they are not educated they consider many things in different ways from us. In many cases I observed their self-centredness. Whenever we went to work in different areas, there were different problems due to the context. Sometimes I went to do something beneficial for them and talked for thirty minutes and it was meaningless after hearing their replies at the end. My work was worthless.

It took a considerable time in this job for him to find out ways to work effectively in those circumstances.

If I talk first then there is nothing more to say or to do because I am the last man. Then I realised the need to change my way of working and felt I should work by developing a team. The team will hear first and whenever they will tell me that this is right time to talk and here is the report, I can talk then. It worked effectively.

The NGO provided him with useful training to tap his skills.

I had a lot of training on many aspects of leadership: team building, human resource management, awareness building, community mobilisation and human rights (women, human, children). Besides, I received training on business management and micro-credit. I received these varieties of training. Finally for skill development I got training on public communication, report writing and so on. So, all these training enhanced my knowledge to foster leadership skills.

Although this training was not on school leadership, Nazrul thought it provided the baseline to develop his leadership skills for being a principal. Most principals do not have this kind of background. Nazrul's case suggests that a richer and more comprehensive series of in-service training programmes for principals may enhance the skills and the confidence they bring to leadership.

I received lots of informal and as well as formal training, at home and abroad. I mingled with different kinds of people, observed their life styles, which helped me to develop leadership. During my earlier job, I worked with slum people and high level people as well. I can understand human perspectives in different levels through my experiences. These understandings developed through different training, workshops, mingling with diversified people and understanding their contexts. These all helped to develop my own understanding in leading people. As I have some skill, when I face a task, I know in which way it would be helpful to be done.

The training in the NGO position and experiences in the buying house helped him to communicate effectively with a wide range of people. Confidence in communication and leadership skills motivated him to engage his school in international connections. He instigated collaboration between his school and a school in the United Kingdom through the *Connective Classroom Project* run by British Council Bangladesh. In this project his school achieved the '*Best School Award*' in 2012. As well, his school worked with the *Youth Leadership Programme* in the United States. Perhaps because of his good communication and interpersonal skills, he is one of a few principals in Bangladesh who has had an opportunity to receive two short training courses on school leadership in developed countries, namely New Zealand and United States of America.

It seems that prior learning and skills have given this principal confidence to work in many situations. Even in a new environment when he does not know the people and situation, his inner courage drives him to step forward. This courage helped him to take on his principal job at a young age. His age, dress, gestures and the way he deals and relates to people are unlike those of more traditional principals in Bangladesh. The vice-principal commented on this. She saw the principal first in the recruitment examination room, where she had been engaged as an invigilator.

When I went to invigilate in the examination hall, every candidate looked experienced and skilled for this position. I knew that one of them would be the lucky person for the principal's position. I was in fear to talk with them, as they are older, knowledgeable and more intelligent than me. At the start of the examination one person entered the room: a young man with red coloured hair. I looked at him with negligent eyes, as he was not like a principal candidate. In my mind a principal should be a person with dignity, aged and speaking little, which was opposite to what he was like. I thought, for sure he is not a perfect candidate for today.

The vice-principal dismissed him in the examination room but kept a critical eye on him. Though she welcomed all the candidates after finishing the examination, she was sure that this young person would not be the principal of her school. Even when she knew of his good result in the written test, she expected that he would not be selected on his viva, but the young man was appointed as principal. The vice-principal recalled how she felt.

After the examination he came to my room straight away when I tried to lie down for a while. He asked some questions and I answered him though I was not very interested. It was kind of a disturbance for me as I was sure that he would not qualify. Even after getting his excellent result in written examination, I thought he would not qualify in the oral. Of course he had good marks in the oral, and he was appointed.

It was difficult for the vice-principal to welcome him and work with such a young man as a principal in such a big school. It was beyond her expectations. She soon had to change her mind. She talked about her first meeting with Nazrul.

After his appointment I was upset. I was wondering about his capability to lead such a big school. Even how can we respect leadership by such a young guy? But he was extraordinary in his first speech. He was expert in language and his way of speaking was engaging which is necessary for teaching. Even his body language attracted us. He has the skill to talk and deal with everyone from top to bottom. I had to change my position from negative to positive at the first meeting and got a confidence that he would do something new in this school.

The vice-principal has been involved in the school for a long time, so to some extent she represents what Bangladesh teachers tend to expect from their principals. Nazrul changed her expectations not only by his youth but also by his demeanour. He later captivated her by his energy, persuasiveness and his ability to engage with people. That he was able to change the attitude of the vice-principal through his speech in a meeting, without doubt shows that Nazrul has the capacity to change others.

A call of soul

Nazrul told me he could hear the call of his soul to lead the school with best efforts so he could reach the goals.

The most important factor is, when I sit in my chair I can hear my soul, which tells that I am a leader of an institution. Many families and their members are looking to me. If the institution loses its reputation because of me, they will be disheartened. If I lack the sincerity to ensure the institute reaches its goals, I have to be accountable to my soul.

This experience resonates with Cammock's (2003) discussion of leadership as 'a call of soul' where he advocates that integration of emotion and spiritual values with tasks, allows leaders to draw on their full repertoire of skills and therefore work beyond traditional ways.

Nazrul feels responsible and accountable to the community as well as to the nation for the school reputation. He does not want to make others disheartened

through any lack of his sincerity in leading the school and that makes him accountable to his soul.

He considers his role as principal to be a duty to society and the nation rather than just a *chakri* [job]. Though he monitors his teachers, he acknowledges that there is a lack of effective monitoring for principals so he feels compelled to provide his own monitoring through critical reflection. "I always want to do better and try to do the best," he said, "This solidarity of doing better comes from inside and then I look for ways how I can do the task in the best way".

He continued, "My vision is to see if I can position this institute as the best one in our country. My school will run similarly to the 'best schools' in the country". The term 'best school' is an illusionary term as it can be defined in different ways. As I have discussed previously, schools that achieve a large number of best grades in public examination are considered as best schools in Bangladesh.

International literature tends to define the concept differently and in many cases rejects the value of such categorisation. So I was curious to know how he defined 'best school'. I received an interesting and provocative answer from him.

By best school I mean those schools that develop good citizens for society and skilled students for the job market. These students will be a wealth to society and will do something for the society. I do not mean only the result in public examinations because results could not be the only criteria for a good school. My aim is to produce some good citizens with good academic results. Good citizen means those who are not harmful for society, who care for the well-being of a society, work for the society, do not hurt people by their words and they put their best efforts into social development.

This answer shows his dedication to develop well-rounded people for his school, the community and society. He is challenged by lack of time, the customs of the place and the poverty of the people; but he proceeds with dignity, solidarity and professionalism without looking back. As he said, "I never look at my clock in doing a job". He has had to overcome many challenges just as other courageous leaders have also had to do.

The teachers, students, parents, SMC members and community people were immersed in a traditional school system but Nazrul opened their eyes to change by providing vision and mission. His self-confidence, analytical ability, long-term vision, risk taking, trustful relationships and inclusive leadership are defining characteristics that helped him in this battle. Without systematic records and parent support he might have lost the battle. His ability to focus on potential challenges is noteworthy and quite unusual in the Bangladesh context.

Aligning Nazrul's qualities and skills with context and literature

This discussion has highlighted a range of skills and personal qualities that Nazrul demonstrates in his leadership of the school. Some of these qualities are personal attributes such as intelligence and courage and some are competencies that have been through past experience such as strategic planning and effective communication. Figure-3 identifies nine key attributes and competencies that I discuss further below. These nine characteristics are inter-related and build upon each other. I will briefly examine each of them separately.

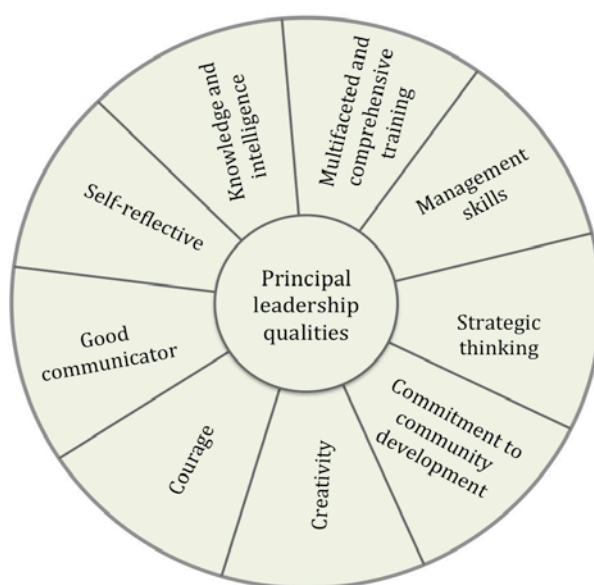


Figure 3: Leadership qualities that Nazrul demonstrates

Knowledge and intelligence

Although Nazrul did not discuss it explicitly, clearly a key quality he brings to his work is intelligence and a comprehensive background of knowledge about education and about community development. He scored well in the recruitment test and he was able to propose and defend his vision in the interview. He was able to rapidly source arguments from hadith and other Islamic texts to support his stance on replacing *borka* with uniform aprons. He readily explored a range of alternative options and mustered persuasive arguments to support his objectives. His previous work experience and his overseas visits enabled him to acquire a thorough knowledge of the local community's resources and needs and the ways that its people operated.

The UNESCO Report (2011) on education in Bangladesh criticised the system for its examination orientation, highlighting the gap between this orientation and the government main objectives for secondary education which involves enabling students to take active part in society as good and responsible citizens as well as preparing skilled manpower for the country's economic development. Nazrul's approach to education, expanded in the following chapters, focuses on both examination readiness and the development of life skills. The events reported in this chapter show how he actively and intelligently manipulates resources and opportunities in order to achieve this holistic approach.

Developing and applying breadth of knowledge is recognised as a distinguishing characteristic of many successful leaders. Parsons and Beauchamp (2011) and Robinson et al. (2009) recognised the importance of knowledge in setting school goals that are valued by the school community. Korach, cited in Mitgang (2012), argued for knowledgeable, highly skilled and relentless principals for the reformation of schools. Gilbert (2005) stressed the importance of regarding knowledge as action and process, an ability to find and use information, rather than a mere memory bank of facts. It is this kind of knowledge that Nazrul has demonstrated in the incidents described above. The literature reviewed in

Chapter Three suggests that such an approach to knowledge is not yet evident in Bangladeshi training of principals.

Multifaceted and comprehensive training

Nazrul came into the principal position with the advantage of training that had included: budgeting; experience of working with people in different positions; leading and managing teams; reporting to his own managers; communicating with buyers; understanding equity issues, including abuse of women and girls; alleviation of poverty; health and wellbeing of slum people. All these skills are relevant to his leadership of a large and challenging school. This growing need of skills development of principals is consistent with a previously reported study in South Africa (Piggot-Irvine, Howse, & Richard, 2013). But it contrasts with the way principals perceive leadership in Bangladesh secondary schools predominantly focusing on administration and management (Salahuddin & Conner, 2015). Nazrul came into the role as an effective leader with multifaceted training that came from outside the Bangladeshi education system.

The importance of principals in school reformation is well recognised in literature (Murphy, 2013; Robinson & Timperley, 2007; Sinnema, Robinson, Ludlow, & Pope, 2015). Nazrul is able to accomplish his job in reforming the school in part because of the multifaceted training he has experienced that is not comparable or common for most principals in Bangladesh. Despite this lack of training of most principals there is an expectation that schools will get the best outcomes for their students. Training principals to develop their capacities for effective communication, establishing trust and creating learning environments with a consideration of the context, has been highly emphasised in research (Youngs & King, 2002). Develop more wide-ranging programmes for principal's pre-service and in-service development remains a challenge for policy and practice in Bangladesh secondary education.

Management skills

Nazrul demonstrated that he effectively manages budgets, resources and people. This is shown in his ability to provide scholarships, build classroom spaces, develop resources and create a development fund for future growth.

Anderson, Briggs and Burton (2001) stressed that budgeting is a crucial factor enabling schools to run their activities smoothly and to achieve their goals. Nazrul manages the income and uses effective budgeting to provide additional facilities for teachers and students. Mncube and Makhasane (2013) have shown that usually principals do not have budgeting skills. Nazrul achieves his financial management effectively and efficiently which ensures that the school runs smoothly.

His skill managing people shows in his ability to win the trust and collaboration of his staff and the community; he eventually managed that with the school's management committee too. Leithwood and Riehl (2005) recognised that understanding and developing relationships with people connected with the school is a pivotal quality of a successful principal. Nazrul devotes his time and energy to develop positive and trusting relationships with teachers, students, parents and community and, in doing so, engages them with the school. These examples support the notion that leadership is reciprocal and enacted in relations between the leader and followers (Parsons & Beauchamp, 2011; Moos, 2009, 2011; Spillane, 2006; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004; Stacey, 2000).

One significant aspect of his people management is that he maintains a process of monitoring other people's actions as well as gradually building their capacity to act independently. One illustration of this aspect might be seen in the way he allows staff free access to the photocopier but he ensures against abuse of that freedom by placing it close to his office. I discuss other examples in the following chapters.

Strategic thinking

Nazrul has skills in drafting plans, developing resources and budgets, and in improving learning practices. He is aware of the realities of the community and of the national context he is working in and navigates his way through obstacles to achieve specific goals. Davies and Davies (2004) and Piggot-Irvine (2010) argued for the importance of strategic roles of a principal within school. They considered that a strategic orientation involves the ability to consider the long-term future, the bigger picture and the current contextual situation. Nazrul's knowledge of his local community, of its resources, factions and ways of operating helps him identify the baselines for his long term plans as well as determining the resources and attitudes that he could utilise to achieve them. Solan (2013) stressed the importance that principals think strategically in response to the needs of his or her school.

Specific examples of Nazrul's capability in strategic thinking are seen in the improved student achievement in SSC examination results after he introduced the novel ideas of sectioning and clustering in classes; shifting the decisions about selecting subsidiary books from SMC to teachers; advancing a meeting with *imams* to resolve the uniforms issue; and expanding the resource base provided by government funding to develop a multi-storied college building by adding money from the school fund. In aligning his prioritised goals with available resources, he has developed the kind of strategic resourcing that Robinson (2011); Robinson et al., (2009) and Wylie (2011) argued is important for ensuring the best use of money, time and people to achieve priority goals for school development.

Commitment to community development

Nazrul identifies his contribution to the wellbeing of his community as a primary goal of school reform. He frames this contribution in terms of improving learning opportunities for the students who will be the future adults of the community,

providing opportunities for parents to become more involved in their children's education and using school projects to improve community health and environmental awareness. These school projects are described later. He devotes time and energy improving relationships with the community. The following chapters illustrate how he involves both teachers and students in community engagement.

Fiore (2011) argued that principals must recognise and deal with community concerns to be effective. Teachers, students and parents may advise on behaviour management, learning problems or ceremonial observances for school development. To enable these members of the community to have a voice, principals need to develop good relationships and listen to others. Nazrul demonstrates how he is patient when dealing with others, for instance allowing parents time to listen to issues allows him to motivate parents to be committed to engaging with their children's learning at the same time as providing him with background about the broader community issues.

One powerful example of his commitment is the work he described with ex-students who had become involved in petty crime, the *mastan*, and his programme for re-engaging them in learning and mentoring of other vulnerable students. Other examples are evident in his process of adjusting fees to match family financial capacity, and his continuous open door to parents and community.

Creativity

Perhaps one of Nazrul's most obvious characteristics is his ability and willingness to think imaginatively and to try out new ideas: he is creative. He sought the appointment as principal to the school with an agenda of innovation rather than one of conforming to existing expectations. Davies and Davies (2004) contended that creativity in problem solving and teamwork can develop the strategic capabilities of schools. Nazrul's goal of comprehensive reform of the

school structures and of integrating the school more with the community is a creative vision that requires a continuing range of creative decisions and actions. Davies (2011) argued that aligning individual and corporate mindsets to the school's strategic objectives is difficult and the principal's job is to make this happen.

Significant examples of his creative ideas include replacing the obscuring *borka* with an apron for girl students and finding a means to communicate to parents who are illiterate to get them to be present at a meeting. Both these ideas had positive impact on the student learning, especially in ensuring students presence at school and in engaging parents to children's learning at home. These ideas are discussed in following chapters.

Courage

Because the context in which Nazrul works for reform and innovation carries risk, it requires personal courage. It is obvious that Nazrul needed courage in the incident when he faced the threat of drawn guns after refusing to comply with demands from particular SMC members. However courageous and often heroic decisions are also required in daily practice. During the early years of his tenure, he survived repeated attempts to subvert his role, by questioning his appointment process, invoking religious claims and calling in an army-lead investigation. Nazrul faced up to all this instead of being intimidated. From the first day in his role, when Nazrul opened his office to parents and community, he defied existing expectations of how a principal should reinforce his status.

I have described certain attributes and actions of Nazrul as courageous. It is important to draw a distinction between such courage, or heroism and the concept of *heroic leadership* that some authors (Manz & Sims, 1991; Murphy, 1988) have criticised as an autocratic style of leadership. In the closing chapter I will address the concept of heroic leadership and examine the extent to which

Nazrul might fit such a mould, and how such an approach may or may not be useful in Bangladesh.

As I described in the chapter on context, forming the managing committee in every school is mandatory (MOE, 2013b), and some SMC members often abuse their power for their own benefits (NAEM & BRAC, 2004; Thornton, 2006), for instance offering a job to weak candidates. To build his school as a learning organisation, Nazrul had to resist the pressure from some of those members. Ahmed et al. (2006) claimed that SMC members have political involvement that leads them to cause a lot of pressure. When there is a difference of opinion between a principal and a local authority, difficulties arise (Alsbury, 2003). Nazrul dealt with the management committee in an exceptional manner that might be difficult for others to emulate; his example urges a rethinking of the current structure of the governance of schools using SMC. There needs to be a real local agency for school development as well as accountability in Bangladesh schooling.

Good communicator

Nazrul demonstrates that he is skilful communicating with teachers, students, parents, community people, politicians and the media. A specific example of his effective communication is winning the confidence and support of his staff, as explained by vice-principal who had initially considered him an unsuitable candidate for principal. Another is his skill talking with two electoral candidates from opposite political parties who sought his support, whereby he enabled them to leave happy despite that he had made no specific promises.

A major testament to his success in communication is the support he gained from the community, particularly evidenced in the coming together of a guardian forum, a union of parents and other community members, who stood beside him during the time the SMC tried to overthrow him.

Mulford (2006) argued that good communication strategies that influence stakeholders to participate in school operations enable principals to get support for school development. Nazrul effectively communicated his vision and gained staff, parents and community support, that led to increased student enrolment and attendance, and that enabled him to resist outside influences on school management. When low efficiency of secondary school management is reported (Ahmed et al., 2006), it hinders social development. Revisiting local needs and taking initiatives using appropriate communication may help principals overcome that situation.

Self-reflective

Nazrul admits he has been eclectic in collecting ideas and plans for school improvement. What allows him to be strategic and effective is his willingness to self-reflect, by considering the effects of his actions and willingness to refine his plans. Osterman and Kottkamp (1993) identified reflective practices as a means of developing self-awareness about performance, actions and effects that triggers opportunities for professional development. Nazrul has become self-aware and critical of his own planning and work at school. This self-aware critique allows him to identify obstacles and progress in implementing changes. Rich and Jackson (2006) argued that reflective ability equips principals to become better problem solvers.

One specific example of Nazrul's self-reflection was his decision to distance himself from the organisation for the ex-students that he had established when he found that it had been co-opted by politicians. Another instance was how he recognised his initial problem with the slum people during his job with an NGO and he sought alternative strategies.

Closing comments

This chapter has reported on aspects of the leadership of Nazrul, a principal in Bangladesh, and the innovative strategies he has used to improve a school in a

lower socio-economic urban area. It has reported key events in his leadership journey and how he gained community support. It has demonstrated the qualities and skills that characterises successful leadership. The following chapter examines Nazrul's work with the teachers in his school and the ways he created organisational structures and experiential opportunities to share power for building their capacities.

Chapter Six

Building Teacher Leadership

Since beginning, our school faced the problem of students failing in public examinations and of huge dropout from various grades. We tried to solve these issues but could not. Change took place when the current principal started to engage teachers and students in teaching and learning. Now students are active participants in classes and teachers lead them to a bright destiny. We lead our faculty members, coordinate tasks and enjoy freedom. Our school walks to a greater success and we are part of that.

-Tasnim, teacher and faculty leader

Tasnim expressed his understanding of the ownership teachers have in leadership of their school. Change for school improvement seldom occurs in Bangladesh schools like this one because of the high student–teacher ratio as well as the contextual, social, economical and political factors at play. However, Shanjeebon School has improved its practice, mainly due to effective engagement of teachers. Teachers in this school consider that they actively participate in leading the school and in achieving success.

This chapter begins with examining practices in Shanjeebon School identifying how teachers are participating in school reform and how they are increasing their capacity to be effective teachers. It explores how the principal shares his leadership, motivates teachers to work as change agents and how they take leadership roles that differ from those in the traditional schooling system. The chapter uses narratives to describe the practices in this local context; then there is a discussion how the ideas link to both the local context and to international literature.

In the Bangladeshi schooling system, leadership is centred on the principal and people expect everything to be processed through that direct leadership. In other countries, the centrality of the principal positioned as leader has been identified

as a potential barrier to strengthening teacher commitment and involvement in school improvement (Dimmock & Walker, 1998), in that it often blocks teachers from taking initiatives and from developing a thoughtful approach to their practice. But in the case of the principal I have studied, positional leadership has become an instrument for encouraging leaders to take more responsibility.

In Bangladesh, teachers rarely have any scope to engage with and lead activities outside of their allocated teaching of classes. Within such a system, and despite it, the principal of Shanjeebon School has developed a culture where teachers can also be leaders. He has done this through personal encouragement, by re-designing some of the organisational structures in the school to enable teachers to act as leaders and by opening up the scope for leadership throughout the institution. These are discussed in the following sections.

Enabling structures

Nazrul focussed on finding what blocked teacher and student engagement. Bangladeshi secondary teachers are used to teaching classes with a large number of students, so they find it difficult to actively engage students with learning. Engaging teachers and students in learning is a challenge for any principal so he must generate some exceptional ideas to meet the challenge. First, Nazrul invited teachers to develop the vision for the school and to expand their skills as leaders as well as teachers. He also changed the usual practice of determining class composition by dividing grade levels into sections, which was a significant step in that re-organising process.

Modify sectioning in classroom

Shanjeebon School used to form the sections in each grade in a similar way to most other schools in Bangladesh. Students are allocated a roll number based on their ranking for their achievement in examinations. The school previously formed two sections per grade where there were more than 150 students. Prior to Nazrul's arrival students were divided into sections in each year level with

those above a certain rank in Section A and those below in Section B. This is a form of streaming. Section B students are considered lower achieving students by teachers, students, parents and the community.

Nazrul started his position in Shanjeebon with a dream to lift the expectations and the performance of the school and noted that students in the Section B were seldom attentive in class and performed poorly in examinations. Neither students nor teachers felt comfortable being in Section B, they all showed their disappointment. The frustration of being a course teacher in Section B is recounted by one faculty leader, Shahrim: "The teachers who taught in Section B received more blame for students failing in public examinations. So students and teachers were not pleased to be in Section B."

There were academic, social and cultural reasons behind their unhappiness. In general, students in Section B were less engaged in class. They seldom performed well in completing their course work and home tasks. As a result teachers often lost interest in their courses and in teaching them so that the students tended to fail in examinations. Students in Section B who wanted to progress did not get enough attention from teachers due to their negative perception of the ability of those students. The negative attitude deprived families of pride in their children and they tended to lose community status through comparisons with other children and consequently the students themselves were sometimes seen as inferior within their own family. Sectioning in this way might be considered to be a way that determines status in society. One teacher, Mahathir, expressed his reaction as a course teacher in Section B.

Because of poor performance they were not accepted well in their families and in society. This notion also put us (teachers) in a lower status whenever we are their course teachers. It often drives us to be disinterested to teach classes and give our best effort to them.

Students in Section B were unhappy and their teachers did not get satisfaction from teaching courses in Section B. I wanted to know how the school tried to

overcome this challenge. The problem in sectioning was clear to teachers, but they could not find a solution until Nazrul was appointed principal. He changed the system of grouping of students so that odd and even number ranked students were clustered together, thus avoiding a division based on previous academic achievement. Now there is no academic difference between sections. This shift in constructing sections did not change student numbers but offered an equal distribution of student achievement in each section. A teacher leader, Mahtab, endorsed Nazrul's leadership in this initiative, "Our present principal advised that we would form sections by even and odd roll numbers. He motivated us and showed how our students would be equally distributed if we do sectioning in that way."

Nazrul shifted a 20-year-old traditional custom of forming sections in the school. When he was an assistant teacher in another school, he had experienced teaching in both types of sections. He became aware that inequality in sections affected the engagement, collaboration and development of students and teachers and that this caused distress and reduced school achievement. So he decided to break the tradition when he got the opportunity. He discussed the issue with teachers before making changes.

I was conscious about sectioning from my experience and knew how frustrating it would be for teachers and students. So I tried to break it within the shortest time and we did that. I got positive outcomes in engaging teachers and students in class.

While I cannot assert that he is the only principal to make such a change and while the change did not eliminate the problem of large class sizes, it has motivated both teachers and students to be more engaged in class. When students felt embarrassed to mention their section's name in earlier days, now they speak out proudly if someone asks about their section because there is no difference. Teachers are also exempted from blind blaming for the failure of students. Shahrim, one of the school's senior leaders, affirmed the benefit of the principal's action.

Previously, we would be disappointed whenever assigned as a course teacher in Section B. Now we do not mind since there is no difference in sections. There was an impact on students due to the new policy. Students in Section B are not embarrassed to tell their section's name that used to put them under pressure in families and society. As we both (students and teachers) are out of this mental pressure, we are more focused on learning.

The elimination of roll numbers determining sections did not abolish roll numbers altogether which still affect student status in society. To get beyond that might be a long journey because the practice is strongly rooted in national education practices and society.

Despite this change, teachers are still challenged to ensure student participation since class sizes are so large. In many cases teachers cannot make contact with all the students in class because of limited time and students cannot engage with lessons properly as many of them need more personalised support to understand the content. So the principal and teachers together discussed ways to engage students within the constraints of existing resources.

Clusters in classroom

When the principal and teachers were looking for ways to engage their students more in classwork, Nazrul was invited to participate in a short leadership course in the USA. The course inspired his ideas for student engagement and leadership. During the course the principal visited some schools and observed how students were engaged actively in schoolwork. Although a huge gap existed between his school and schools in USA in terms of context, Nazrul was considering how to apply the ideas he was learning to his school. He thought that if students and teachers were able to work collaboratively in ways that could engage students in teaching and learning, then that would enhance the classroom environment for better learning. He discussed the idea with his teachers and planned to develop *student cluster committees* in classes across the year groups.

Cluster committees are defined as small student groups of ten students in each group within a class so that students could help each other in their learning. There are seven or eight groups per class. In this way teachers can reach and assist each group rather trying to help each student. Group members sit together so that they can support each other. So that each group is diversified in abilities, teachers created clusters involving students across the range of academic abilities. Using the roll numbers every tenth is selected to form a group. Teachers then nominate a student within each group as their assistant for teaching. This student works as a leader to communicate between the teacher and group members. Teachers and students both report that they benefit from the clusters. Mahathir, a teacher in the school, explained the problem and the solution that was put into place:

It was impossible for me to reach every student in a class since the class size is quite big. I would walk through the class but could watch work at best for ten students. So, many students could not understand the content I taught. Students did not assist each other since they were not used to doing so. Now they sit in a cluster system and help each other. Since the clusters are made of mixed ability students, they can easily help each other.

Both the amount of teacher time available and the prevailing school culture were issues but clustering is a shift in culture that has enhanced the engagement of students and teachers in learning. When teachers enter the classroom, they first talk to the cluster leaders to check on the learning status of their groups. Student leaders maintain a diary to note down whether members are confident they can do assigned learning they have completed home tasks. This means that the teacher does not need to go to each student as students are taken care of by fellow students. The close seating arrangement also helps students cooperate with each other. It enhances the collaboration among students and helps teachers to utilise their time more effectively in reaching more students. So the cluster system motivates teachers as well as students to accomplish more in class work. Suva, a teacher, discussed the benefits of the cluster system.

There are limited numbers of student leaders in every class who take care of other students. So I can easily reach to them and be informed about other students. When I enter into a class I ask group leaders whether any member needs further assistance for previous content or not. Even during the class time, I do the same. If anyone in any group needs help from me, I can offer assistance with time.

School leadership is now delegated because of improved connections of teachers with students in class. Since responsibilities have been delegated to student leaders in the classes, teachers have been relieved of some of the teaching load. Previously, teachers could not always perform as well as they wanted to, but delegation has helped them to use their teaching skills more effectively and in so doing fosters their leadership and that of students.

Whenever students take care of their peers in small groups, they first need to learn how to facilitate. They need to coordinate and communicate with teachers and among group members. They also need to set goals and objectives for the cluster which go along with setting their life goals. Teachers supervise and monitor student leaders doing these tasks. A student leader, Shayan, expressed how they took on roles and how teachers guided them in leading their peers.

We work as teacher assistants in class. When the teacher comes to our class, she or he asks about our group. We report to the teacher about group members and we ask for further help if needed. During class, we help our friends if required. As a leader sometimes we need to prepare ourselves to help friends in learning. Moreover, we resolve conflict among group members. Our teachers guide and monitor us in doing all these things.

In this way a culture of sharing responsibility for learning has been developed in Shanjeebon School, with teachers and students as active participants. The principal guided them and strategically delegated the leadership roles.

Another crucial issue for learning is ensuring that students have access to content in textbooks. In Bangladesh, every school selects some additional subsidiary books for the grades. Nazrul had to find an effective way to select

those books to enhance student learning and to circumvent corruption of this selection process.

Book selection

It was important that useful books were selected to support student learning. As I discussed in the preceding chapter, Shanjeebon School used to have their books selected by their SMC members and some members often received illegal money from publishers as payback for selecting their books. Nazrul learnt that most SMC members were not themselves educated and even those that were had little understanding of what was involved in student learning. So they would not know which books would be useful for teachers and students. This caused issues because inappropriate resources were purchased for teaching and learning.

The principal and teachers wanted to overcome this problem so the principal considered how to manage the SMC. He got conditional permission for the teachers to select books for one term (quarter of a year). The continuance of this system was dependent on the examination results. Therefore it was important for the new selection process to show an impact on student learning,

Committees were formed for each grade. The responsibilities of a committee included getting respective books together, evaluating them, ranking them and advising the principal. Nazrul discussed his initiative to involve the teachers.

I developed a new strategy for book selection. I made different committees. Each committee consisted of five members from respective fields and led by one. I told them that they are required to select one best book from many of those referred by publishers for this year. All the committees selected books for different courses and signed it before they submitted their lists to me.

Since teachers know curriculum content, they know which books would be most useful for their students. Normally SMC used to select books from one publisher. The reason might be that it suited their notion of making money go further. But

teachers wanted to select books from several publishers because the books from one publisher were not necessarily suitable for learning in various courses. When Nazrul put forward the selected ranked books to the SMC members for final approval they questioned his approach. According to Nazrul, they were anxious about losing their power and, for some, a source of illegal income. Nazrul described his experience.

I presented the ranked books to the SMC for approval. Through the committee, we selected books from at least 20 companies when they used to have been from one company. One renowned book company might have some good books but of course not all. SMC asked me what is the benefit to select books from different companies. I answered that teachers' choice was important because if they selected the books they could not complain about inadequate content.

Teachers evaluated books enthusiastically when they had that opportunity for the first time and they saw that it could help them teach better. They then took on the challenge to improve results when using the books they had selected themselves. This system resulted in improved teaching learning at Shanjeebon School. Zakir, a current SMC member, understands the benefits of book selection by teachers.

To give good books to students, teachers select the books at the end of each year. We make teacher committees to select books in different courses. The committees propose good books to SMC from different companies. We approve those selected books and it enhances improving teaching learning at school.

Previously there were many complaints about the books. These complaints came from teachers, students and parents. Teachers often claimed they could not get appropriate content from a given book. Students and parents often complained to teachers and the principal because there was wrong information in their books. Nazrul could not deny that since they were right in most cases. Now the principal seldom gets complaints about books. If there is a complaint, the principal can call on the leader of the respective committee to explain the choice.

Teacher leadership and student learning are enhanced through this process.

Nazrul commented on the book selection process.

There was a leader in each group who was responsible for the selection. The leader was accountable to answer any issue that arose. When there are some issues about one or two specific books, I do not ask all the teachers. I ask only the leader. Besides, if one teacher makes a complaint I would say the book is not selected by me. You selected the book and here is your signature. So there is no way to make lame excuse about the teaching content. Clearly, teachers are accountable to me for selecting books by them. I can confront them if student progress is not satisfactory.

Nazrul claims that the new book selection process makes teachers accountable for their teaching. Previously they could avoid teaching some areas of content by claiming an unavailability of resources. They cannot do that anymore. If they do then the principal, parents or students can hold them accountable. Students understand the lesson content better because of the new system.

Institutionalising leadership roles

Creating leadership opportunities is essential so teachers can gain leadership skills. Because there are no other formal leadership positions, apart from the principal and vice-principal, in Bangladesh schooling policy, teachers have little opportunity for taking on leadership roles. However, effective leadership in a big school like Shanjeebon is almost impossible without delegating tasks and coordinating teachers. Because there are two shifts (morning and afternoon) in the school, teachers work at different times. Having sections in every grade spreads teachers across the campus. The resulting lack of coordination impacts student learning and evaluation. Nazrul had to develop effective communication and a well-coordinated system in his school.

Developing a faculty system

From my observation in other schools, course teachers in the morning shift do not get opportunities to talk to the teachers of the same course who teach in

afternoon shift. Because there is no formal requirement to talk to other teachers, they might not make an effort to meet and talk to each other. The same situation occurs between the course teachers of different sections as they have limited opportunity to meet. As a result, teachers teach courses in their own ways, sometimes well and sometimes badly. Students in less well-taught classes learn less, which is evident in the examination results. Mahathir, a teacher and SMC member, described what it was like.

I have been teaching in this school since 1994. We used to teach classes in traditional ways. We did not talk to each other regarding professional issues. Besides, due to shifts, we seldom met teachers from another shift. So there was a lack in our communication and it did impact on teaching and student evaluation.

In previous times, tasks might have been allocated to individual teachers without formal designation of leadership but under the direct supervision of the principal. In 2011, Nazrul came up with an idea of *faculty* as a structure for communication and coordination among teachers and to cultivate their skills within specific academic fields. Nazrul was inspired by visiting secondary schools in New Zealand and saw that dividing the school subjects into different faculties built the capabilities of teachers. Faculty is defined as a unit in which a group of teachers from a similar academic field of courses work together to plan, develop courses, evaluate their teaching and share professional development opportunities. In faculties, teachers get opportunities for leading and learning through coordination and communication among each other and between faculties to implement the school vision and achieve the goals.

Grouping teachers in faculties is not a common idea in secondary schools in Bangladesh. Although teachers are recruited with qualifications from various areas of knowledge such as science, commerce and arts, schools do not create structures to divide them into separate areas. Because Nazrul was impressed by the potential benefits of faculties, he wanted to introduce that structure.

Teachers seemed happy with this idea, despite it being unusual. Mahtab, a faculty leader, noted that it is uncommon to group teachers of subject areas.

In secondary schools, working in faculties is not a common idea. There are practices of faculties and departments in universities or colleges but not in schools. We are lucky that our principal has started the system in our school.

Introducing this new idea into a traditional system was not simple. It needed to make sense to teachers for them to welcome it. Nazrul had to explain how it would run and how it would improve teaching and learning. Teachers have little time together and work on different shifts but if they could be given a scheduled meeting time it would be possible to discuss academic issues under the faculty system.

I called an academic meeting to discuss about faculty system. I tried to define a faculty system and mentioned how teachers and students would benefit through this system. Through our discussion teachers were motivated and agreed to develop five faculties as Bangla, English, Science Education, Business Education and Arts Education.

In this manner, Nazrul introduced the faculty system. His success in doing so indicates that as a leader he has built a strong leadership stance and teachers follow him trustingly based on his record of reliability. To run the faculties systematically more teacher leaders are needed in addition to those who already exist in the roles of principal and vice-principal.

Delegation of work and leadership

The principal and selected members of the staff set up a project within the school to identify and divide the tasks within the school, specify job responsibilities and boundaries and set targets and goals of each of the faculties. They decided that faculty leaders would be the key people and that they would resolve problems whenever possible at faculty level. The faculty leaders were accountable directly

to the principal. In this way, faculties developed leadership learning for teachers. Tasnim, a faculty leader, described the initial process of faculty development.

After developing faculties, we divided our work under faculties. To organise the work a leader was needed for each faculty. The leader is responsible for communicating with faculty members and coordinating with other faculties. They set their faculty goals and guide teachers to reach the goals. The leaders are also responsible to report to the principal.

School leadership is delegated through these faculties and teachers have started to work beyond centralised leadership. The principal, who previously had to make decisions by himself, now can get suggestions from teachers and rely on faculty leaders in making decisions. Faculty leaders take responsibility for communicating ideas to their members. Thus, Nazrul has built a new way of communicating with the teachers.

Our leadership in school is distributed to these faculty leaders and all decisions are made through them. Because of the faculties I get answers from one person for all questions in one faculty. When I give any message to the faculty leader, she or he conveys it to faculty members and get back to me with result after successful completion of that job with team members.

Now leadership is delegated in Shanjeebon School and teachers are actively involved in leadership. Because there was no previous practice of taking formal leadership roles by teachers, key questions might be: How did teachers cope with the idea? How did the principal find teacher leaders immediately?

Selecting leaders

In selecting faculty leaders, Nazrul has developed a process that is different from what is most common in Bangladesh schools where age is often the key factor for selection. Instead the principal instigated a process that focuses on teacher professional skills, interests, commitment and experience. In a meeting, Nazrul asked faculty members to propose and vote so that an energetic, skilled and

interested person would be their leader. Whereas in most schools, teachers who are senior in age would normally lead tasks, Shanjeebon School has quite young leaders. Shahrim, one faculty leader, described this process.

Faculty leaders are selected based on their knowledge and skills. If there are 15 teachers in one faculty, the most skilled person has been selected without considering age. We have some young leaders who are focused on school goals. All the teachers are concerned about quality work when they vote for their leader.

This idea of selecting and training leaders could set an example for other secondary schools in Bangladesh. Young, energetic and skilled teachers are taking leadership roles rather than leadership positions being allocated on the basis of seniority. This practice seems democratic and effective in selecting leaders. However an issue to consider is what Nazrul does if a leader does not lead well. I asked Enayet, a faculty leader, about that.

A faculty leader's position is not fixed for a person. If the leader shows incapability to do his or her job well, we have the opportunity to talk to the principal. The principal reserves the right to replace the person in coming academic committee meeting.

This process of selection and replacement is undoubtedly a major shift in the context of Bangladesh. An issue, though, is whether older teachers, who may have felt loss of status, resist this process. Resistance could create problems in professional and personal interactions. But resistance may lessen if the system produces better results. According to the principal, there was indeed a need to overcome resistance from some older teachers who initially felt they had been slighted because their seniority had been ignored.

At the time we started the new system of selecting leaders some senior teachers were not happy since some of them lost their standing. It took time to show the benefits of the new system and convince them. They are happy now because they can work under the close supervision and support of a leader that was not possible in earlier days.

It was challenging for teacher leaders to convince and satisfy the teachers in their faculty. Indeed the new leaders had to prove strong leadership. The older teachers have become reconciled to the appointments and even enthusiastic about the new faculties when new leaders are seen to be offering useful academic support to their teams. Previously some teachers were not brave enough to discuss their problems with the principal, now they find it easier to share them with the faculty leader. Supporting all teachers for every problem is impossible for a principal. But when there are more leaders, teachers can get help from them rather than from the principal. So the new faculty system impressed teachers within a short time.

To enact leadership roles effectively, faculty leaders are required to develop some leadership skills. It was clear that faculty leaders came to positions without prior skills. No formal courses for such training are available in the Bangladesh schooling system. So the principal arranged sessions on how to work and accomplish these responsibilities. Because of the continuous support and trust of the principal, teachers were motivated to take on and overcome the challenges of developing and working in different faculties. Aziz, a faculty leader, endorsed his confidence in the principal.

Faculties were created in 2011 in our school. By that time we knew our principal well and could rely on his words. Though at the beginning we did not have ideas about the responsibilities as a faculty leader, we were prepared to take the challenge of taking and leading new duties after discussion.

It seems teachers embraced the idea of faculty leadership very quickly. It indicates that they had a strong trusting relationship between the teachers and the principal.

To boost teacher leadership, Nazrul promotes opportunities for decision-making within the faculties. If any teacher comes to him with an issue, he suggests they discuss it in the faculty first. This form of distributed leadership is exercised through the faculty system in Shanjeebon School as Nazrul described.

The leaders discuss with teachers, develop plans, write down resolutions and submit to me with signatures of all members. I have been informed about what was discussed and what the decisions were from the resolution. If they need any decision from me, the leader may come to my room or can communicate by mobile.

Along with the principal's instructions, faculty leaders work towards common goals, a common sense of teaching and a clear school vision. The vision of Shanjeebon School is to be the best academic institution in the district within ten years. To this end, faculty leaders set their goals and develop work plans at the beginning of every year with the support of teachers who help them to explore and develop their ideas. To facilitate the process, the school arranged a full-day workshop, and all teachers were required to participate. They met in groups to discuss the previous year's achievements, looked for things that could be done better, set goals for the current year and developed strategies to reach these goals. At the end of the workshop, a core committee, including the principal, combined all the groups' goals and drafted the annual goals for the school. I collected the workshop records for the year 2013. The significant goals were:

- Taking special care of students in grade five, eight and ten who sit public examinations
- Arranging special classes for weak students in different grades
- Taking action based on examination marks for students who are at risk
- Talking to the parents of students who achieved lower marks in examinations
- More preparation and learning of subject teachers is needed to be skilled in their courses
- Making the cluster committee more functional
- Introducing monitoring classes by leaders

To achieve these goals there is the need for good communication and coordination among teachers. If Nazrul did not have a well-coordinated system, there was a chance these goals might remain on paper rather than operating on the ground. So I wanted to find out how they developed communication and coordination in such a big school and to understand what impact that had on the school's success.

Coordinating shifts and sections

By having common goals, the principal needed coordination between the two shifts and among the large number of teachers and students. Cohesion of teaching and learning in the subjects is very important. Previously teachers were not concerned about coordinating courses or communicating with each other. Sometimes Nazrul had conveyed a message about a change in content to a subject teacher, but there was no clear process for it being passed on to other teachers. So there were complaints regarding examination questions, such as that the answers were not covered in class teaching. Lack of communication was evident at that time.

After introducing faculties into the school, every teacher worked within a specific faculty. All teachers in a faculty meet together monthly to plan courses, examinations and evaluation. Examination questions are developed by individual teachers and submitted to the principal to moderate and adapt as the final questions. This process means no one teacher knows questions that are set in the final question paper. So subject teachers try to communicate with each other about course content. The monthly faculty meeting allows them to exchange their views, progress and plans. It keeps them updated in terms of principles of teaching and learning. Mahtab, a faculty leader, reflected on the way he perceived the change.

Before developing faculties, there was limited communication and coordination among teachers. As a result, students became the ultimate victims in examination and evaluation. Sometimes parents

came to the principal and complained that the course teacher did not teach the content in class that had been set in examination questions. Now there are no complaints as teachers update themselves regularly with their faculty leader as well in the monthly faculty meetings.

During examinations, faculty leaders work as controllers of examinations where their focus is to ensure fair evaluation. They plan, monitor and manage the examination process. There was a claim about teachers being biased in evaluating answer sheets. To overcome this claim, Nazrul has started a coding system in examination answer sheets that maintains anonymity of the students. The first photo shows the space allocated for names and codes and the second shows the separated section linking code and identity.

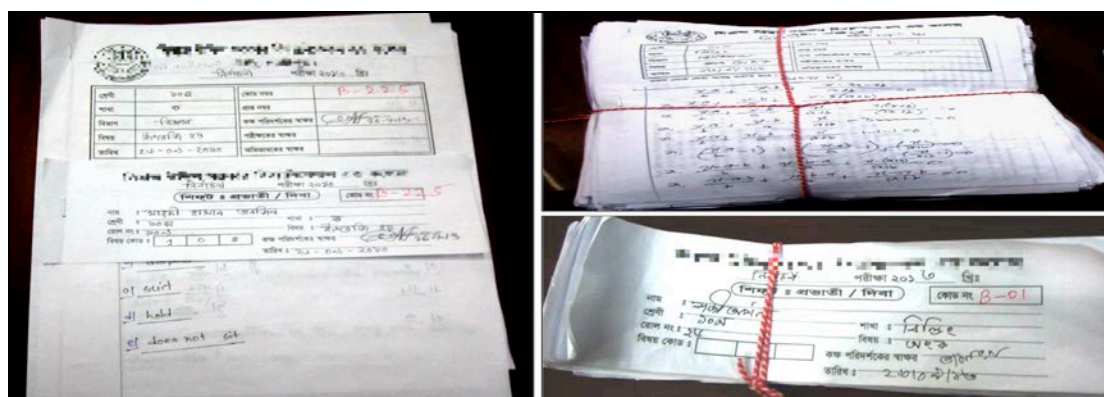


Photo 6: Coding answer sheets

The sections with information about student names are submitted to the principal and he keeps them locked away until the answer sheets are returned after being evaluated. Again when course teachers finish evaluation and submit answer sheets to the faculty leader, the leader collates the separated parts to each answer sheet based on codes. This process ensures anonymity and justice in student evaluations, and faculty leaders play a strong role in doing that. Tasnim, a leader, describes their roles in examinations.

We five, the faculty leaders, work as examination controllers. We are members of the school examination control committee. When teachers hand in the answer sheets, we receive them at the principal's office.

Then we put codes on each answer sheet. There are two parts on the cover sheet. One part has a space to write the student's name and other part has no name. When all answer sheets are coded, we detached the parts with names. After doing this we submit the detached parts to our principal. Because of the code system, teachers cannot recognise any student since their name is not on the answer sheet. Even it is impossible if my own child is there. It helps to evaluate examination papers without bias.

In this way, faculty leaders maintain good communication and coordination in their faculties and work through a process to ensure student anonymity in examinations.

Developing relationships

Developing a culture of valuing each other is important if teachers are to work towards goals and lead with confidence. Nazrul has developed a culture where teachers listen to and respect each other. Generally teachers value their colleagues who listen and care about them in professional and personal matters. My observations of teachers indicate that they had opportunities to talk to faculty leaders at any time. Teachers feel comfortable to share their professional issues with other teachers and leaders. They have built an environment in the school of collegial trust and support. Some issues lead teachers to compete with each other, but it does not impact on their relationship. Suva, one teacher, praised the teacher relationships.

We have good relationships among our teachers. If someone faces challenges in understanding any content, she or he might discuss it with the faculty leader or a colleague easily. And everybody is open to help each other. There is some competition among teachers who teach the same subject to some extent. Since some teachers are involved with private tuition they compete with each other, which is natural. But in general, I would say, our relationship is smooth and strong.

The principal plays a strong role as an advisor, supervisor, advocate and friend in various situations that help to build trustful relationships among the teachers. Faculty leaders have been able to build trustful and reliable relationships within

their teams, motivated by the inspiring leadership of the principal. These faculty leaders help the teachers in their teams to build a culture of reliability, trust and interdependency in the school. Teachers are happy because they feel their school is like a family. Nazrul is aware of this.

They know very well that I stand beside them in any situation. For any of their problems if they want to phone someone, that's me. It does not matter how big the problem is. Even for family decisions, they sometimes ask for my suggestions. So we have very good relationships and I try to maintain that.

The principal and faculty leaders in Shanjeebon School try to predict when teachers need help and then support them appropriately. Timely support helps teachers to develop themselves more powerfully, both personally and professionally. Faculty leaders also seek advice from their colleague teachers on issues and value their insights. As a result teachers feel included in decision-making. Teachers believe shared decision-making empowers them and gives them opportunities to become more skilled leaders in future. In this democratic process, teachers value that they have a say in what they do. These leadership characteristics allow Shanjeebon School to focus more on student achievement. Mahathir, a teacher and SMC member, explained how he perceived the leadership of the principal.

The principal considers every teacher equal in his eyes. Each teacher has different personal characteristics and the principal tries to understand that. And he builds relationships based on individual personalities. We do not hesitate to visit him for any professional issues. Sometimes I hesitate to go and ask for personal favours such as a leave to attend a marriage ceremony. But his door is always open for us and he welcomes us anytime to talk about any issue.

Dialogue with teachers confirmed that there is a good level of trust in this school and that teachers respect the principal highly. The principal and faculty leaders play strong roles building relationships amongst staff. Democratic practices are driven by the principal's approach that has established a climate and culture of trust for teachers to feel comfortable about contributing.

Building teacher-parent relationships

Breaking the ice

The principal realises how important it is to engage parents and community for the wellbeing of students. Many parents are day labourers and illiterate, which limits their confidence and capacity to take an active interest in their children's schooling. These parents seldom came to school to see how their children were progressing. To face this challenge, the principal engaged students in a campaign to motivate parents to come to school to join the parent meetings. Students were instructed to give a letter from the principal to their parents and to collect signatures from parents to agree to be present. He was able to get almost all parents to his first parent meeting. Getting them to come to the meeting was a first step, but the more important challenge was to help them engage with their children's progress in learning.

Previously, the school authority had not appreciated the importance of how parent involvement in the school could contribute to better learning. Although the SMC could play roles in encouraging parents, it seldom took responsibility regarding parental involvement. Nazrul recalled that, when he proposed the first parent meeting, the SMC Vice-Chairman had said: "Our guardians (parents and care givers) are not aware enough. They normally do not come". Teachers also thought SMC members, who were also parents, were not thoughtful regarding parental involvement at school. Mahtab, a faculty leader, explained the teachers' previous perception of parental engagement.

We seldom communicate to parents and did not have designated parent meetings. Many of our SMC members and teachers had a negative perception about the interest of parents in joining a meeting. They had doubts because most of parents are labourers.

To parents participating Nazrul opened the floor to questions at the meeting to listen to them. He wanted to get suggestions about the successful and weak points of the school. The principal wanted to hear them because he knew that

clarification and addressing any issues would help in improving student learning. Most of the talk was positive and the parents and teachers talked through a range of issues. Because parents were not always diplomatic, what they had to say was sometimes uncomfortable for teachers. Nazrul tried to note all their concerns and answer them if he could, or at least acknowledge them if there was no ready answer. Not unexpectedly, he encountered strong resistance from some of his teachers.

When they were talking against us, I saw that my teacher faces were getting red. They were not used to hearing these things in a public forum. Parents were talking about what they get, do not get, and what they expect from teachers. My teachers were not happy and I had to meet with them afterwards.

After the first parents' meeting, the principal met with the teachers and discussed the importance of constructive criticism and how it would benefit their school in the near future.



Photo 7: Parent meeting

One significant complaint was that teachers do not evaluate answer sheets accurately. Because students and parents did not get an opportunity to check their marked answer sheets, they could not understand where students made mistakes and how they lost marks. That also made the evaluation process questionable to parents and they queried whether teachers really evaluated the

answer sheets or just created results as they wished. Nazrul explained the process.

There was a complaint that teachers did not show the answer sheets to students after evaluation. Teachers just announced the marks. Students or his or her guardians could not see the answer sheet. Children did not know where they made a mistake and why they got less marks. Parents said they did not know where their children wrote wrong answers and they wondered if teachers had evaluated the answer sheets or not.

Regardless of whether the complaint was right or wrong, as might be expected teachers found it difficult to receive criticism easily. So, the principal had to meet with teachers to discuss the issues raised by parents as they were blamed because of the way the current system operated. Nazrul indicated he wanted to motivate and encourage his teachers to increase their confidence and self-efficacy. This knowledge, he thought, would benefit their school. He reported the discussion.

I told them: You teach for your pride. You are doing a job, giving your best labour and receiving a bad reputation. You do teach, administer examinations, evaluate answer sheets but you earn a bad reputation such as you might give marks without evaluation. In your job do you want a bad reputation? All said no. I continued: When you have evaluated answer sheets, you are honest. There is no weak point in your mind and you can easily show the answer sheets to students. Besides, you are a human being and you might do mistake. If you show the answer sheets before recording marks, you could easily fix the mistake. Through this process, you can justify your accountability.

After that meeting, teachers became more willing to acknowledge their limitations. If they had previously announced marks without evaluating answer sheets they were not able to in the new system. It became a process of changing the teachers' thinking and building relationships with students and parents.

Now teachers communicate with parents to let them know about their children and to get feedback about their teaching as well. Parents are encouraged to come to school and talk to teachers. There is a positive impact on student learning

because of the good relationships among teachers, students and parents. Students realise that they should attend and prepare their assignments regularly since their parents can contact teachers at any time. Enayet, a faculty leader enjoys about the benefits of parent involvement.

Because of the distance between us and parents they did not tell us about their child before. Now they can talk to our principal or teachers easily. So they often come to school, talk to us and there is no distance. It also makes the students mindful because they know teachers can talk to their parents any time. Every student's parents name and phone number is available to school and teachers. So it makes them aware that their presence and participation in schooling is noticed.

Previously teachers were not used to talking with parents. Some thought they should take on a specific *teacher personality* when communicating with parents, somewhat distancing themselves from them. There was impetus to change the culture when Nazrul began his 'open door' policy with parents. Any parent could come and talk to him any time. Teachers were under pressure to change due to this policy. Many teachers could not accept the policy at first. Even Ointika, the vice-principal, was cynical about this initiative, and she used to act with the aloofness and formality that she believed teachers should assume. However, she was convinced when she observed the benefit of talking with parents in a friendly manner.

I preferred to talk little to parents with a very strong personality so that they value my position. Parents or students had never seen my smiling face and I thought smiling might lose my personality. When the principal started openly talking to parents in a very generous way, I felt embarrassed and that challenged me. At first, I was not comfortable with his way of communicating, but when I observed the benefits it convinced me to change myself.

It seems that Nazrul's behaviour motivated his colleagues to change their behaviour, including their way of communication to parents and students. When teachers talked to parents in a positive way, it broke power relations among them, even though parents were unaccustomed to being consulted about education.

Building relationships

Although the ice in the relationships among teachers and parents started to melt, the principal was challenged to help all students to pass the public examinations. Each year some students sat public examinations and failed. There would have been an easy way of getting rid of them as other schools do, and that was to not permit them to sit in public examination. But Nazrul wanted to solve the issue differently. As teachers explored the benefit of building relationships with families, they became happier to develop real interest in creating bridges that would support student learning at home.

Nazrul developed a strategy where teachers took responsibility for students at risk of failure by dividing them into groups. Students were organised into groups of five to ten under each teacher who took extra care for those students at school or home. These teachers carefully checked to see if these students required further assistance and organised how they could get revise the content as needed. Teachers also knew, that some students did not have anybody at home to help them. So they often visited students in their homes to check on them. These actions have enhanced student learning at home and made significant differences in public examination results. Suva, a teacher, discussed the experience.

We have started one thing that we did not do earlier. If there are 300 students to sit for a public examination, they are divided into groups under teachers' names. For example, we have 60 teachers. Then ten students would be named in a group with two teachers. The teachers' responsibility is to take special care of these ten students at school and home.

Home visit were revolutions in many ways. They motivated students and their parents to make an environment for learning at home. Now some parents, who previously did not ask their children about their schooling, have become interested in their children's learning. For some students for whom learning at

home was not supported, teachers can advise the parents about how to make the home environment more supportive.

To make the process effective, Nazrul monitors teacher performance. Teachers are required to report to the principal or vice-principal on about what they are doing and how they are solving issues. As a result, visiting students in their homes has become a systematic process in Shanjeebon School that facilitates communication between teachers and parents about student learning and enables them to communicate with each other regularly. If any teacher needs extra help in solving an issue, she or he can pass it onto the principal. Mahathir, a teacher, shared his experience of home visits.

It is monitored how many days we visited students' houses, what we discussed, what kind of coordination we had with students' parents, how complaints were addressed and what else students can do for better results. All these issues are required to be discussed with the vice-principal or principal. Sometimes there is a report that a teacher could not solve. Then the principal calls the student and his guardian (parent or caregiver) at his room to talk about the issue.

The ways of breaking the ice in relationships among teachers and parents and building trustful relationships among them drive the school to success. Nazrul works on the assumption that simply entering the home and talking naturally with parents makes them feel more comfortable with the school and motivates them to support their children's study. His perception is that home visits indeed make a difference, and teachers also report on the success of the strategy.

Building capacity through leadership

Shanjeebon School has also created leadership opportunities outside the classroom. Through Nazrul's initiatives, teachers have taken leadership roles within national and international projects, such as the *Connecting Classrooms* and *Tree Plantation* projects. *Connecting Classrooms* offers international leadership opportunities; the *Tree Plantation* project connects teachers with

their local communities to provide leadership in changing their own neighbourhoods.

The *Connecting Classrooms* project aims to develop young students as global citizens. It has opened some leadership positions for teachers and students in this school. It provides professional training for teachers and principals to develop ideas about global citizenship. It also offers leadership training to principals, teachers and students for preparing leaders in schools and classrooms. This project links Bangladeshi schools to schools in the United Kingdom where they learn from each other. To maintain partnerships, a co-ordinating teacher in Shanjeebon School leads interactions and discussions with the counterpart school. This teacher leader received training through the project so that he could guide his students to develop awareness of global issues. Through this project, teachers get the opportunities to be global leaders. Suva, the coordinator and teacher, shared his experience.

For the project, I need to communicate with our connecting school in UK. Students exchange their views on different issues through e-mails. I got the opportunity to visit our connecting school and attending a short training on leadership through the project.

Since 2010, as part of this project, the school participated in the *Global Handwashing Day*. This initiative has been of great benefit to Shanjeebon School. Many students used to be sick due to stomach problems, often attacked by bacteria because of the lack of cleanliness. It was clear to the principal that students needed to learn about cleanliness in thorough and practical ways. So Nazrul arranged an observance of the Global Handwashing Day. When they observed and displayed the practice of *hand washing* correctly in their school, incidences of sickness were greatly reduced. Then he planned to extend the project into the surrounding community. Nazrul ran that project through teachers and students. I discuss it more fully in Chapter Seven.



Photo 8: Observing Global Handwashing Day

The hand wash programme provided an opportunity for teachers to take roles in leading their students and community. When they sent an account of their activities and the impact they had on student and community health to their connecting school in the United Kingdom, the other school sent back an account of how they too had learned from the project. In this example of collaborative learning, Nazrul created opportunities for teachers and students to learn abroad and to work for their community.

As they benefitted from their involvement in international programmes, teachers became motivated to lead a programme to make their local environment safe. To counteract the effects of industrial pollution, the school initiated a programme of planting free trees in nearby communities. Although the idea came from the principal, a teacher leads the programme. Some organising is involved setting up the programme, such as buying plants, distributing them to young people in society and taking proper care of them. Teachers gained experience in leading students and young people within the community. The teacher, Suva, shared his experience.

We have a programme to keep our environment safe. We call it the Tree Plantation Programme. Every year we organise the programme to distribute some trees free to our young generation. Our students monitor how they are taking care of those trees. Through this

programme we are connected to our society and lead it in keeping our environment safe.

Led by teachers, the school runs clubs for students that included debating, drama, Red Crescent and Scouts. A teacher is assigned to lead each club and is responsible for student engagement, learning and leadership in that club. Teachers get the opportunity to lead in school and in some national programmes through these clubs. They also receive training about how to operate clubs. The ways they lead the clubs has helped them learn and understand leadership in contexts different from school. Nazrul had a process for selecting teachers to lead the activities.

For extra-curricular activities we give responsibility to those who are interested in doing this. For example there is a gardening programme at school. And we have two agricultural teachers in two shifts. So they get the leadership for that case. They need to grow plants and gardening at school. They also engage their students who are dedicated to do that.

Nazrul selects leaders for the extra-curricular activities on the basis of their relevant previous experience and interests. In a school where teachers had often seen teaching as a fairly routine job, Nazrul emphasises their dignity and *pride of teaching* (Alam, 2015) through his own creativity, intelligence and enthusiasm in leading the school. He shares his leadership with teachers and demonstrates how collaboration can promote success in such a challenging school.

Aligning Nazrul's practices with context and literature

In the section that follows I consider how Nazrul's practices, which are strongly grounded in the experiences and needs of his local context, may align with what international research and theory says about leadership. In doing so I am not suggesting that all, or any, of the concepts in international leadership writing may be directly applicable to Bangladesh or that they indicate an ideal path to follow. However, the value of a body of international scholarship is that it provides material for comparison and for strategic selection of relevant ideas for

local experimentation. In such an approach I find I am following the example of Nazrul himself, who looked at overseas practices with curiosity and deliberation in order to find ideas that he could adapt to his own context and its needs.

Narratives in this chapter indicate that the principal has created opportunities for teacher leadership in a number of ways: re-aligning organisational structures within the school; providing scope for such leadership across the activities of the school; and actively engaging teachers in the building of school-parent relationships. Throughout there is a focus on building teacher capabilities through their experiences of leadership and on building school capacity through its teachers to improve student learning, both academic and life skills. The teacher leadership practices in Shanjeebon School are summarised in the model below.

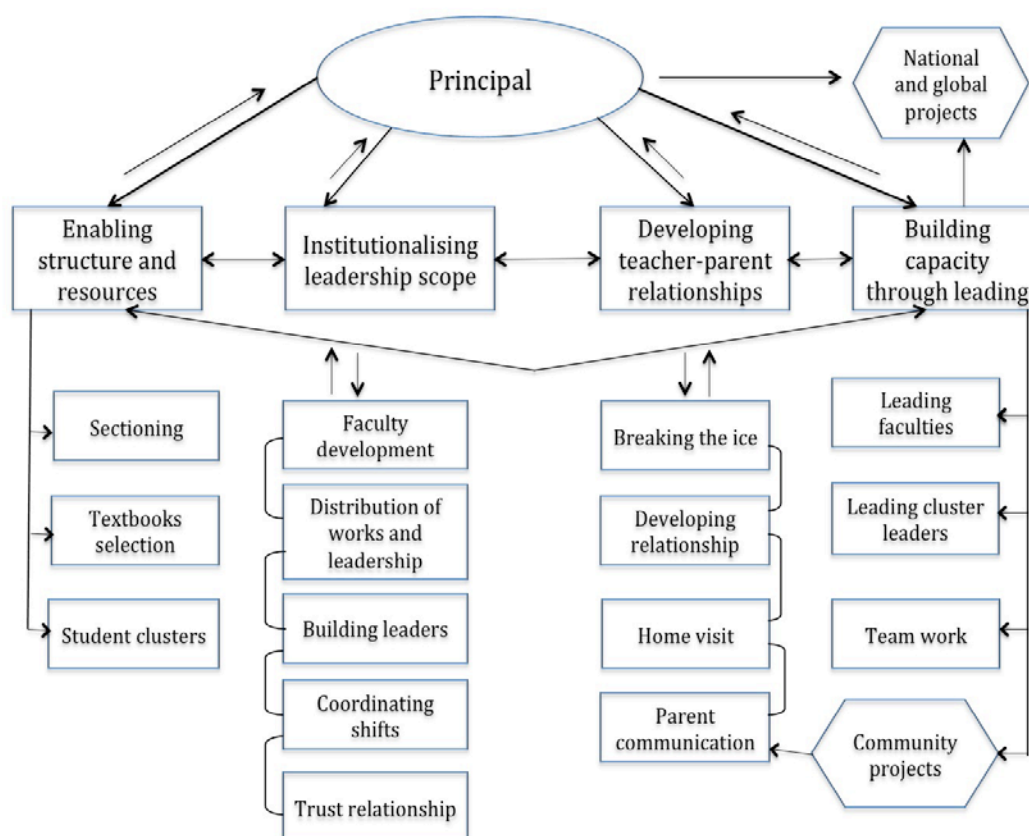


Figure 4: Strategies for building teacher leadership in Shanjeebon School

Leadership in this school is driven by Nazrul's strategies for sharing responsibilities and creating new opportunities for teachers to lead. This leadership enables collaboration amongst teachers, students, parents and community by engaging them to contribute to and shape the vision, rather than them continuing to be just delegated tasks. These actions resonate with the idea of distributed leadership Harris (2008, 2012) advocated where principals hand over authority and enable others to lead innovation and change. The key strategies used to build teacher leadership are re-shaping school structures and re-assigning leadership roles to enable teachers to focus more on teaching and learning. The benefits of skilled leadership include teachers becoming more involved in their jobs and the school achieving better examination results. Students, parents and community are also part of a school improvement process, especially when they are encouraged to support the school and contribute to the vision by helping the students to learn. International literature (Bush, 2008; Fullan, 2010b; Robinson, 2010) affirms the positive impact of effective leadership on school and student outcomes.

The principal's idea of sectioning and clustering students within classes differently is innovative and successful because it has changed the culture in the school, playing a strong role in reducing inequity and disquiet among students and teachers. There are examples of strong policy commitment to equity and social justice in schooling in countries such as Australia and New Zealand (Bishop, 2011; Dempster, 2011; Wylie, 2011). A requirement of policy concentration in this regard is identified at Bangladesh secondary schools for better student participation (Ahmed et al., 2007). Nazrul has demonstrated how a leader can overthrow a traditional practice that embedded inequity and make changes that address the reasons for disengagement of teachers and students in this school. Blankstein and Noguera (2015) argued, "[for principals] pushing for excellence through equity requires great courage and conviction" (p. 9).

Although other concerns such as large numbers of students in classes and short duration of lessons were often mentioned in reports on education and in

literature in Bangladesh (Ahmed et al., 2006; Hamid et al., 2009) as obstacles to engaging students in learning, the psychological impact of sectioning had not previously received attention. Dialogues with teachers and students indicate the power of the change to how sectioning operates and also the initiative of clustering in classes. Teachers are now able to provide individual support to students because of the strategic management of time in class. Students are encouraged to help their peers in learning. The most effective part of this idea is the practice of shared responsibility between teachers and students. As discussed in Chapter Two, teaching in Bangladesh secondary schools is usually teacher-centred and students seldom get the chance to participate in a class. This practise now contrasts with Shanjeebon School where practices are effective in having participatory teaching and learning.

Nazrul has demonstrated a purposeful and distinct practice for engaging teachers in academic decision-making that is important for student learning. If principals lack skills and assertiveness school administration in Bangladesh is often captured by others such as SMC members, who may not have background in education or in-depth understanding about what can make a difference. Such capture misleads schools rather than providing much needed support as discussed in Chapter Five. Narratives in this chapter show how the decision of selecting subsidiary books by teachers complemented student learning.

Harris and Muijs (2005) and Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) described how processes for allowing and growing teacher leadership require a shift in school culture. When teachers in Shanjeebon School contribute to decision-making and accept the responsibility of selecting books with essential contents, it shifts not only the accountability but also the culture of the school and its relationship with the SMC. Nazrul's practice of involving teachers in decision-making sets an example for policy makers and other principals in making provisions for effective learning with teacher accountability.

Another initiative not commonly found in Bangladesh is institutionalising leadership opportunities by developing faculties and delegating responsibility for tasks among teachers. Whereas, in many schools in Bangladesh, principals tend to use their power in a dominating manner, this principal shares responsibility for improving student outcomes. In the context of underprivileged areas in the United States Blankstein and Noguera (2015) advocated the need for leaders to find new solutions for teaching and learning that help teachers enable more effective learning outcomes. The faculty system has created leadership opportunities for teachers in Shanjeebon School. In this school, this practice seemed absolutely ground-breaking to teachers, quite different from traditional boundaries in school management within which they had worked previously.

Leaders in this school are selected on the basis of their skills, interests and experience, which is a break with normal school practice in Bangladesh. Initially the new faculty leaders had little idea about how to lead their faculties, so the principal trained teachers to take on new responsibilities in supervising their colleagues. This strategy is similar to work in the United States reported by Merideth (2007) where teacher leaders are risk takers and collaborate with their colleagues when they were supported to do so. Although there was initial resistance to the selection of leaders from the older teachers who were unhappy when younger, skilled colleagues began to work as faculty leaders, they accepted it as a positive change once they experienced the benefits. Research has shown that resistance is a usual part of the change process, but that strong resistance makes success more difficult (Brundrett, 2010; Fullan, 2007; Reeves, 2008). Nazrul could not stop all resistance to his changes, but he strategized to achieve positive outcomes early so that resistance weakened.

The faculties have contributed to setting common goals for this school. Effective communication and co-ordination among and across leaders and followers is required to create a positive school culture and in facing the challenge for learning (Mulford, 2010; Zidan, 2011). Teachers working within the faculty structure, attending regular meetings about the progress of teaching and

learning issues, addressing the challenges and processes of evaluation, increase their professional development in collaborative learning. Piggot-Irvine and Doyle (2010) advocated that effective collaboration and reflection among teachers may contribute to their commitment and ownership in learning of new skills. The faculties have developed the teachers' capacity to implement a comprehensive system of setting questions in examinations and in developing a relatively static evaluation of students in between sections. Teacher collaboration has encouraged them to set specific objectives at the beginning of each year motivated by the school vision of achieving the first position in the district. In a previous study about principal leadership in Bangladesh, I could not find any written goals and objectives evident in the schools in Bangladesh, despite their good reputation (Salahuddin, 2011). Nazrul is an exception in leading his school with a vision and goals.

An effective and trusting relationship is required for Shanjeebon School to achieve its goals. Nazrul's intelligence and creative ideas have made him a role model in building relationships among teachers, students and parents. Day (2009) advocated that principals should model best practice in changing and building the capacity of their teachers. Teachers in Shanjeebon School changed the way they functioned. Previously they communicated less with their colleagues and parents. However, the principal's welcoming and friendly behaviour to others provides a model of a communication approach that enables teachers to change their customary role and the ways they communicate. One significant example is the vice-principal who was inspired to act as an open and communicative person rather keeping herself isolated because of her perception of her status. The growing strength of professional relationships is allowing the school to grow into an environment where teachers, students and parents are listening to each other in order to improve learning. This aligns with Fullan's (2001a) statement, "[it is] relationships that make the difference" (p. 51).

In the narrative in this chapter, I have shown how teacher resistance was reduced as a result of teachers listening to the principal and participating in

strategies to minimising complaints. Perhaps Nazrul's most important personal trait is his capability to motivate teachers by drawing on their inherent desire to help students and their pride in teaching. Resistance against the young leaders in faculties was an initial challenge. Although Nazrul had to take risks developing trusting relationships among teachers, parents and students, those risks opened doors for potential dialogues about how to build teachers' professional skills and engaging parents in students learning.

An important feature of Nazrul's innovations, which is not so common in Bangladesh, is the involvement of teachers in student learning at home. From my experience I have seen some similar initiatives in other secondary schools, but the significant factor here is that Nazrul has developed a school strategy for tracking changes in student attendance and learning. When home circumstances preclude support for students at home, Nazrul's initiative of teachers visiting students at home encourages parental interest in student learning. Halsey (2005) and Leithwood (2009) argued that in fostering teacher-parent relationships, individual contact with parents is as important as having only an open access policy at school. In the context of a rural community in New Zealand where historically parents had felt alienated from the school, Wilson explains that visits to homes, instead of summoning parents to the school, created bridges with the community and made parents believe their children are valued by the school (reported in Greenwood & Wilson, 2006). Perhaps education policy in Bangladesh could include appropriate guidance about home visits, because such policy potentially could close gaps between school and home and could improve student learning.

The principal has demonstrated his willingness to share leadership with teachers and to generate opportunities for teachers to practice leadership through national and global projects. These projects result in teacher capacity building, enabling them to engage with the community and providing extra-curricular learning. For example, the *Connecting Classrooms* project offered professional training for teachers, and the *Tree Plantation* project allowed them

to lead students for community wellbeing. Harris (2012) and Lovett and Andrew (2011) advocated the need for principals to create opportunities for teachers to develop their leadership capacities. Many schools in Bangladesh work with clubs. A more targeted strategy of developing projects in connection with the community could encourage teachers and students to explore social and environmental issues, as the Tree Plantation project does.

This chapter has identified a number of significant personal characteristics and skills of the principal and within his team of leaders that have enabled them to improve teaching and learning and lead in new ways, even in the absence of apparent immediate solutions. Examination of these qualities and the ways they were translated into action is of particular interest for determining future directions in policy and may provide guidelines for leadership training courses. This chapter identified five key aspects of this principal's approach that have been illustrated in the narrative and that are summarised in Figure 5.

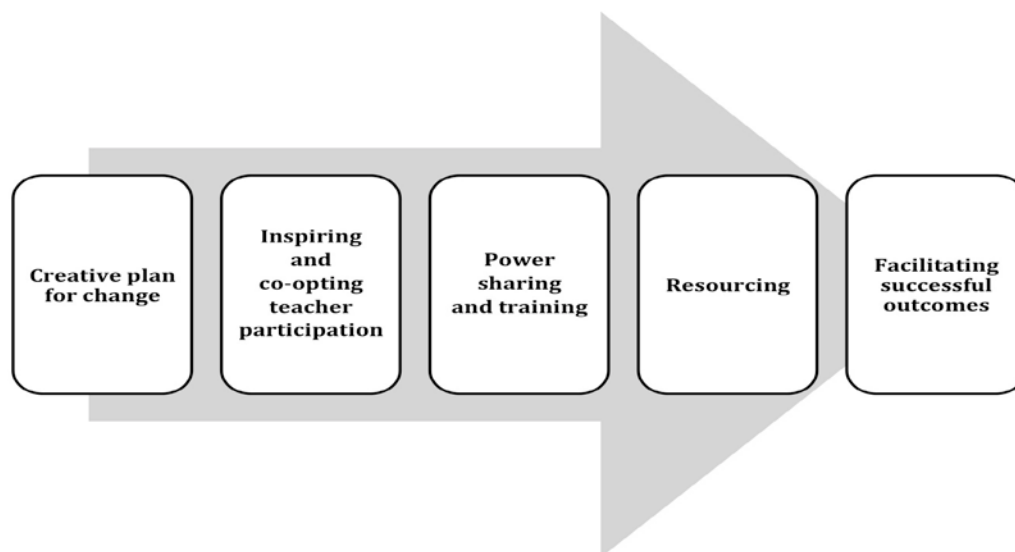


Figure 5: Leadership for empowering teachers

The first aspect involves personal skills and attitudes. Key among these is the ability to think differently and being prepared to take risks. Also important is the

capacity to adapt ideas learned from the outside (perhaps international practice or research or another school) to the specific needs and opportunities of the local context. These personal qualities are evident in shaping creative plan for change.

The second aspect involves values and interactive strategies. The building of trust is central here, as affirmed by research (Fullan, 2007, Reeves, 2008). The personal courage and the skills of being able to inspire and motivate others are important. So is the demonstration of respect and support. These allow the building of relationships and opportunities for collaborative action. These values and interactions enable the principal to inspire and co-opt the collaboration of others.

The third aspect is using a range of processes that allow new leaders to emerge and consolidate their roles. These involve the principal surrendering aspects of control and sharing power. They also involve a processes of training those who pick up emerging new roles so they are set for success rather than failure.

The fourth aspect is resourcing. This involves setting-up meetings so that communication can occur and problems can be tackled. It includes re-structuring aspects of the organisation that previously created obstacles, or re-allocating responsibilities so they are more manageable. Financial expenditure is allocated to set up projects and link with other, international, organisations that already have established resources and that welcome collaboration.

The fifth aspect is a clear and determined focus on promoting opportunities for successful outcomes, so that the emerging leaders and their collaborating communities feel reinforced in their efforts and are able to let go of their fears. In student terms it involves more personal engagement in learning and better examination marks. In community terms it involves being heard and parents becoming more engaged in their children's learning. In teacher terms it involves

feeling more effective in creating learning and in contributing to the local community.

Closing comments

The narratives in this chapter have reported on the strategies of the principal in sharing his leadership with teachers. They demonstrate the personal qualities of Nazrul in engaging teachers in school reformation. Given the significant gap between the policy for school improvement and the practices in schools in Bangladesh, this chapter offers examples of how a creative principal has involved his teachers in re-positioning the school, in terms of overcoming the overt obstacles and closing the gap between vision and outcomes. This chapter also identified that the leadership in this school is focused on student learning. The next chapter examines the principal's work with the students and the ways he created opportunities for learning in a school in an unprivileged area.

Chapter Seven

Student Engagement in Learning and Leading

We help weak students during class time to understand their lessons. Sometimes they inform us of their problems and we set a time together for the next day to discuss it thoroughly. We try to solve their academic problems. Sometimes we do it during tiffin (snack) break. We may do it after school hours in what is called detention. We, cluster leaders, especially help them in major subjects such as Mathematics, English and Higher Mathematics. Our goal is to prepare our peers for a better future.

-Sonia, student leader

This statement, from a student leader at Shanjeebon School, explained how student leaders support their peers in learning and assist teachers in classroom activities. The role of student leader is one of a number of initiatives the principal has implemented to increase student engagement in learning and in the development of life skills.

This chapter reports on strategies taken by the principal to improve student engagement at school and within the community, especially for improving learning achievement and gaining life skills. I start this chapter with an observation made during data collection and a personal experience of classroom activities during my own secondary schooling. Then the chapter examines initiatives taken by Nazrul to involve students within the classroom and in interaction with the wider community. It explores how the principal used interpersonal communication to reform aspects of curriculum to make it relevant to the learning of life skills as well as meeting academic expectations. It also examines how students were enabled to learn about their history and culture as well to be prepared for examination success. This chapter concludes with how these strategies relate to the needs and constraints of the local context and how they align with concepts developed in the literature.

During my fieldwork, an academic from New Zealand visited the school. By that time the students were used to seeing international guests in the school because of the principal's interest and involvement in a number of international projects. So the guest was made welcome and did not cause surprise in the classroom. I noticed the expectant curiosity on the part of the visitor after she had met with the principal. Nazrul had talked about his initiatives to improve student engagement and she was looking forward to seeing how they worked in practice in the classroom. I reflected on the class visit in my field journal.

The professor entered a classroom with the principal. Students showed respect to her by standing up. The room is a square-shaped classroom with a traditional seating arrangement. Around 60 students are seated in two rows of benches having a gap in middle. The professor asked the students some questions and got answers from students seated in various places. Then she opened the floor to their questions. The students were curious about her country, New Zealand, such as where it is located, what it is renowned for, and what its main earning sources are. The professor seemed satisfied with the students' responses and curiosity because she has experience of visiting some other schools in Bangladesh. Perhaps she still had a question in her mind: how is it possible to engage such a big class in learning?

-My field journal, 25 August 2013

Having such a large number of students in one class is usual in Bangladesh; engaging them effectively in learning is a challenge for any school. As a Bangladeshi, I was brought up in this country and lived my school life in a suburban location. I can still easily remember my secondary school life where there were around 100 students in a classroom. We were given sequential roll numbers according to our scores in examinations. Rankings of one to ten were considered the '*best*' students in the class. These students were more engaged in their classwork because of their ability to understand the course content and because of the teachers' positive attitude to brighter learners. Teachers, students, community and even parents recognised them as future leaders for the school, family and society. So the majority of students, who were not ranked as best, rarely had the opportunity to actively engage in class.

We, the so-called best students, were considered elite, and enjoyed reserved seating in the front rows in class. Other students, either from respect or culture or because they knew the teacher would reprimand them with a glance were not interested in sitting in those front seats. Although there was a competition for grabbing seats among students, we were not worried because of our perceived status. Even teachers did not feel comfortable if lower roll number students occupied a front seat since they may not have been able to answer questions. We completed our daily homework, which assured teachers who took it as a sign of good delivery of their lessons. Teachers used a lecture method in most courses. They seldom allowed questions from students and presented a rigid front that discouraged insightful responses from students. So students, except for the 'best students', rarely talked in class. If there were visitors in a class, only the best students were instructed to answer them to show the best of school performances.

Unfortunately my childhood school memories are still the current common practice in schooling in Bangladesh. Although some schools have physical facilities to have fewer students in classes only a few parents have the ability to afford those schools. As I have noted, Shanjeebon School is established in a community where most parents have limited ability to pay for schooling. So Nazrul has had to think creatively to facilitate student engagement within the constraint of larger classes because he cannot provide more classrooms with fewer students.

Engaging students in school

The principal initiated the modification in sectioning students to engage them more in learning and to break down a traditional concept of good and bad students. Now there is no way to say which section is good or bad, which is discussed in Chapter Six. However I wondered if status distinctions remained among students. The sections are balanced with the new system of odd and even roll numbers but status may not have been eliminated because students are still

allocated roll numbers and the school cannot easily get rid of these since they are part of national practice in the schooling system. Nazrul also had to think about how they could overcome the negative effects of large class sizes.

Cluster committees

Because the 'best' students used to sit together in the front rows in a class, Nazrul wanted to spread them out so that other students would get the opportunity to collaborate with them. This initiative led Nazrul to introduce the idea of *student cluster committees* to enhance student peer learning and to develop leadership within the classroom, as discussed in the last chapter. Student clusters are made up of mixed ability students, by selecting students across the entire range of roll numbers. Considering the psychological impact, the principal does not label a student as *bad*. He and his staff tend to refer to students as 'good, better and best'. The school uses the format below to develop cluster committees in the grades.

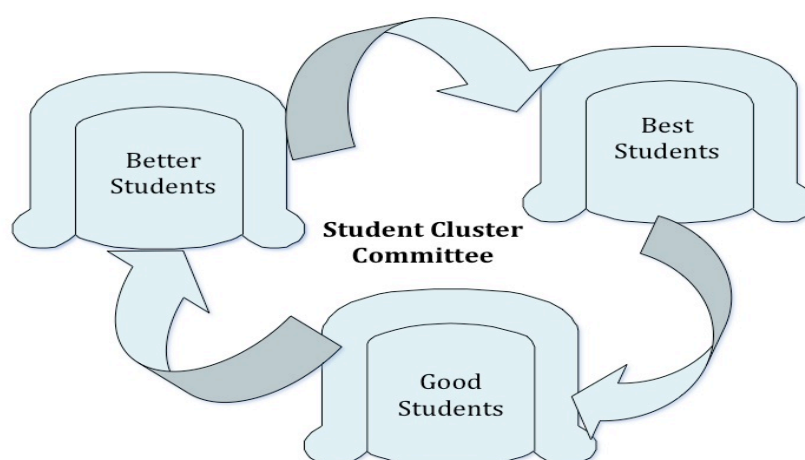


Figure 6: Formation of student cluster committee (ISAP, 2012)

There is a leader for every cluster, who is initially selected based on academic achievement and the leader is responsible for the learning and achievement of his or her group members. Cluster leaders take care of curricular, extra-curricular, social and cultural enrichment of group members.

Peer learning and leading

Cluster leaders supervise the learning of their group members to help with their academic development. They maintain a diary to record the daily academic performance of the students in their groups. In the diary they write the names of their group members and courses. In each class they note *P* and *A* respectively for presence and absence for each member. When any member is absent, the cluster leader finds out the reason. If the absence is for more than two days, the leader lets the teacher know and the teacher tries to communicate with the parents. If the teacher fails to communicate, the student leader visits the student's home and finds out the reasons for the absence. This practice helps students to be conscious of their responsibility to attend school regularly. If someone is absent for a valid reason she or he does not face any school penalty. All these efforts improve attendance and assist in developing good relationships between school and home. Below is an example of a student record book:

Cluster Name: Night Queen		Leader: Mohona					
Date: 15/04/2013		Day: Monday					
Roll	Name	Pres ent/ Abs ent	Ben gali	Engl ish	Mat hs	Phys ics	Chemi stry
01	Mohona	p	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	Mou	p	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
41	Farzana	p	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
61	Nishat	p	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
81	Mukti	A	A	A	A	A	A
101	Sarmin	p	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
121	Sraboni	p	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Signature of Class Teacher:							

Photo 9: Student record book

As well the leaders monitor and mentor group members to check completion of their daily schoolwork before the teacher enters the classroom. Leaders record

whether assignments, in class and at home, have been completed. The teacher also randomly crosschecks to see if students have completed their assigned tasks. Leaders also provide extra content tutoring for slow learners to ensure they keep up with the class pace of learning. Their target is to enhance their peer learning as Sonia, a student leader, described.

We complete our diary before the teacher enters into class. We check group members' work for assigned class work whether it is ready or not, and put a tick or a cross mark in the diary and show it to teacher. Then the teacher also tests them randomly to check. We also do it even during class time. Since every teacher has a personal way of teaching, we try to follow our course teacher. Sometimes we give our group some tasks and receive feedback.

After these efforts, if cluster members are unable to complete their assigned tasks, the leader keeps them back after school for a period so they can finish. Every day some students are in such detention from several clusters. The detention takes place under teacher supervision and one leader monitors it as Pallob, a student leader, explained.

We put them in detention after school hours. The detention is for if one cannot complete her or his assigned work; she or he has to complete it before leaving school. Cluster leaders do the monitoring job for detention by rotation. If I monitor all of the detained students today someone else leader will do it next. Since it rotates, it does not create pressure on one person.

So students cannot postpone their daily work and the close follow-up enhances their regular learning. This form of peer mentoring and monitoring has the potential to develop close and trustful relationships.

Student leaders play a role as teacher associates. Monitoring and supervising a large size class may be beyond the capacity of one teacher so student leaders make the job easier by taking on some of the responsibility. The leaders do many things such as mentoring, peer discussion and ensuring homework is completed, but they do not teach the class. Limited class time makes teaching ineffective for

individual students in many schools but in this school assistance from student leaders makes it more possible for teachers to accomplish their job within the allocated time.

But what if a leader works for his or her self-interest or if a cluster member does not comply with the leader? Class teachers and the principal are aware that these issues could arise and take action at times as Nazrul explained.

We keep our eyes open to watch how the cluster leaders lead. If something wrong happens, we notice or other students let us know, instant action is taken. Sometimes we change the leaders. Sometimes we interchange their groups.

In such a way clustering students enables building good relationships that foster teaching and learning in class. The culture of taking leadership and helping peers also provides opportunities for students to learn and develop leadership skills at school. This system allows leaders to learn from group interactions, particularly about how different people process ideas and problems and how to communicate with and motivate a team.

Reciprocal learning

The principal and teachers organise and manage student cluster committees, which is a major component of the school's plan to develop students' academic achievement. What motivates students to take on these roles? What are the benefits for them? What complexities do they experience leading their peers? I was curious to know the answers. When I was talking to student leaders they were clear and confident about the benefits of helping and leading others. They think that helping others to understand something in any course enhances their own learning. Before helping someone, student leaders need to prepare themselves first so they are confident being able to solve the problem. It pushes them to learn something more quickly and when they discuss it with a peer who needs help, it becomes more significant learning for them, potentially acting as reinforcement for them. Mim, a student leader, explained how she sees it.

When we help weak students to understand, it enhances our learning. Before going to help them in solving any problem we need to understand it clearly. That strengthens our learning.

In the upper grades, Grades Nine and Ten, students take some compulsory courses in common and are also put into streams such as science, arts and business. To make leader's job workable in these streams, clusters are formed within the stream and leaders are selected from the same stream so they can help their members.

Sometimes a leader does not understand a content well and then will go to a peer leader who understands it clearly. It seemed there are good relationships and understandings amongst student leaders. They even go to their teacher to build their own knowledge when needed. Bristy, a student leader, confirmed what they do.

Leaders from science group help their peers from science and accordingly the arts group do for arts. When I feel it is a problem to understand, I go to my teacher or another leader who understands it clearly. Of course each person does not understand all courses properly.

Although there are good relationships among students and teachers in the teaching and learning process, in some cases they cannot override the prevailing power relationship between some teachers and students. A fear of punishment by teachers still operates. Students do not criticise their teachers. This became clear to me when a leader, Keya, spoke to me about a particular teacher.

The chemistry teacher is not good enough in his subject knowledge. This teacher often faces problems in solving mathematical problems, chemical reactions and so on. He was even in trouble during a practical class when one day he could not do anything for one hour. So it would be better to put him off from this course. There are similar problems in different courses but students do not want to speak out because of fear.

Perhaps student leaders hesitate to tell to the principal about these instances because it could make trouble for them if the reaction to the complaint went the

wrong way. They became reluctant to tell me about such cases even when I assured their anonymity. It could be that they did not want to disclose their teachers' weaknesses to me as an outsider. In the case where the above comment was made to me, I was also informed that their principal already knew about the issue in teaching. Mim, a student leader noted, "The principal is already informed about this issue, but cannot change the chemistry teacher yet". It implied that they trusted the principal to take action and they found their own way to inform him.

Leading extra-curricular activities

Cluster leaders encourage their group members to participate in extra-curricular activities. They do this from a sense of responsibility, and from a motivation to be acknowledged by the principal as the 'best leader of the year'. In the competition, curricular as well as extra-curricular activities are both counted. Tauhid, a student leader, explained how he sees this.

Beside academic assistance, we motivate our group members to participate in co-curricular activities. We also try to encourage them to be involved in social work. Since our school selects best leaders for a year, we try to inspire our group members the best way.

Student leaders are in competition to develop the curricular and extra-curricular skills of their group members. To be a 'best leader', they compete with each other but the leaders claimed they do not fight. Shimanto, one cluster leader affirmed, "There is no quarrel between groups, but there is a competition".

Cleanliness of classrooms is a part of cluster leaders' responsibilities. The leaders divide their duty to keep a classroom clean among the clusters. Because several clusters exist in a grade, they do the job on a rotational basis. It sharpens student awareness of cleanliness that has impact on their family life as Keya, a student leader, explained.

We do clean our classroom by ourselves. We divide the cleaning job among clusters and each cluster is assigned for specific days. It helps us to learn cleanliness and to keep our home clean as well.

Practices that impact on improving values, such as cleanliness at school and home, are not addressed in many schools; however Nazrul has introduced ways of systematically putting some into practice.

Challenges in leading peers

Although student leaders are seen to be doing a good job advancing learning for the whole class, the system is not running without problems, as usual in leadership jobs. Student leaders take responsibility for resolving issues within their groups or for seeking help from a class captain (a student who takes the leadership role for a class). If a problem is not resolved quickly, they report it to a teacher and hand over responsibility. Pallob, a student leader, explained how this works.

Sometimes they (students) fall into a quarrel. Sometimes they do not want to follow our leadership. In that case the leader tries first to solve the issue. If the leader is unable to solve it, then she or he reports it to the captain. If captains can solve, the issue is resolved otherwise it goes to a teacher and she or he takes action. For example, teacher gives penalty, change her or his group or just discuss why she or he should follow the leadership.

Though there are challenges, student leaders believe their experience will help them to be good leaders in their workplace and for the nation. They think the skills they learn through working in a team contribute to development of their leadership skills. Bristy, a student leader, confidently shared her beliefs about this.

I believe it will help me in the future. I will be able to control a group of people easily as I have got experience. I know how to work in a team, how to lead team members and what I need to do if there is an issue among team members. For this I hope to be a good leader in future.

Although this shows the confidence of student leaders and their belief in the cluster system, they also appear to be aware of both system limitations as well its benefits. The cluster system helps student leaders stay closer to teachers. They have easy access to their teachers, which allows them to discuss any issue with teachers directly. Because everything runs through clusters, other students have to consult their respective cluster leader before doing anything. It helps students who feel uncomfortable asking teachers something talk more easily to their group leaders. On the other hand, it has stopped those who were willing to talk to teachers directly. Rekha, a student leader explained both aspects of this effect.

Many students in class might like to be connected to teachers in the same way we are. They lack the opportunity since they normally communicate with teachers through leaders. On the other hand weak students are not interested to talk to teachers because of fear usually. When they want to know something from a teacher a leader helps them as a medium of communication.

Student leaders show their confidence in handling the challenges in leading peers. They are aware of the negative and positive effects of this system on their peers. Nazrul is key leader of this initiative in the school. He also extends student learning beyond the school grounds because he knows the value of the skills they gain help students become future leaders of society.

Engaging students in community

Nazrul considers the surrounding community a potential source of learning and has engaged students in learning through community services. He encourages students to look at emerging problems in the community and to find ways to resolve them. They live in a reality where some issues need to be considered urgently to develop a healthy environment at school and home such as cleanliness, food habits, environment and coping with natural disasters. Students cannot solve all those problems but they have power to be proactive and to make community people aware how to prevent or at least deal with them. Nazrul

started by motivating students at school to be proactive to prevent bacterial and viral attacks. As a start, he led the school to observe the Global Handwashing Day, aimed to encourage students to maintain a clean and healthy life.

Global Handwashing Day

Since this school is situated in a bazaar area and surrounded by a slum, bacterial and viral attack is common, especially in food contamination, and causes sickness. As a result many students get sick and are absent from school. The experience of working for the slum people in an NGO helped the principal understand the issues involved, examine causes, and search for solutions. At that time the school had a chance to become involved with *Global Handwashing Day* on 15th October from the *Connecting Classroom Project*, discussed in preceding chapters. All students and teachers took part in the observance ceremony.

Based on his experience, Nazrul emphasised the need for washing hands properly after using the toilet and before eating and in keeping their surroundings clean. He highlighted the need for care of maids, in families that have them, as they often take charge of children and cook for the family. Nazrul advised students, “You must give a message to your mother for providing soap in the maid’s bathroom and in the kitchen to wash her or his hands properly” (International School Award Portfolio [ISAP], 2012, p. 17). The principal showed students the proper way to wash their hands using a medically approved chart. Teachers also showed students the face of germs in a cartoon so that they can get the idea easily. Students became aware of germs and learned the correct way of hand washing from the graphics because many did not know the appropriate process. In addition, an instruction sheet was provided to follow the process at home. Students committed to wash their hands regularly in the way they had been instructed.



Photo 10: The Handwashing Day observance (ISAP, 2012, p. 17)

Students soon saw the benefit of proper hand washing within a short period. There was a radical change in sickness rates among students. The principal collected data of sicknesses from the nearby community health complex. There was a huge drop in admissions to the health complex after the observance of the Global Handwashing Day as Nazrul recalled:

Before the celebration, the number of children who were admitted in the health complex for their sickness was thirty-two in one month. But after celebration, for the month, the number was reduced to only three.

This is an example of Nazrul's intelligent approach by leading students in learning life skills that have an impact in real life and learning at the school. Such learning content is included in the curriculum but skills like these are better learned in practice than from a textbook. Although teachers deliver the content, students seldom get opportunity in the classroom to learn experientially. Such leadership encouraged students to share their practice with other family members. The trend of reducing visits to a doctor motivated the principal, teachers and students to promote the idea to the rest of the families in their community. They started a project to do that.

Cleanliness is better than medicine

Following the initial interest, the principal began a project for greater wellbeing of the broader community. He named the project imaginatively, '*Cleanliness is*

better than the medicine'. It carries a clear message for students and community about reducing medicine costs, which is significant since most families earn barely enough to live on. Nazrul planned to collect data first from the community about cleanliness. Under teacher guidance, students developed a questionnaire to survey the cleanliness of community members. The survey is in Appendix-2.

The survey collected data such as names, total number of family members, income sources, income earners, monthly income, monthly medical expenses, living area and people who were likely to be sick. They also wrote a short story about each family's health issues. Students learned stories of different families' approaches to cleanliness. In various families they found specific reasons for sickness.

The following examples of three case studies, which are collected from school documents (ISAP, 2012, p. 20-23), illustrated the richness of the stories gathered and the initiatives taken.

Case-1:

Kamal's father and mother both sell green vegetables. Their monthly income is 10,000.00 BDT on average but they have an expense of 1500.00 BDT for medical each month. The mother and the youngest child are the vulnerable persons in this case.



Kamal's family, data collection and handwashing

When Kamal goes to school his little brother stays alone at home. He plays with local friends in dust, garbage and takes unhealthy food from the vendor. Most often his little brother suffers from stomach pains. He is often admitted to hospital. Most of the income is spent on the doctor and medicine and medical tests. Moreover when his mother looks after his little brother, their business stops and this reduces their monthly income. When Kamal celebrated "Global Handwashing Day" in school, he found that it was easy to stop his younger brother's stomach pain by changing some habits of cleanliness including washing hands with soap or ashes after coming from the toilet.

When they followed this habit they got positive results very soon. His brother started to use sandals, washed his hands after toilet and before touching or taking any food. He also stopped eating unhealthy food from the vendor. His mother always took her child to her work places and looked after him. She washed her child's hands before giving him any food.

This changed their habits and created better health. Now all of the family members are free from stomach pain and from the disease that is carried by water.

The story reports on how they learned that children may be in contact with bacteria and got sick. In addition, it shows the impact of sickness on family earning and expenses. Kamal, a student, who was motivated by Nazrul to hand wash, has taken responsibility for changing the habits of his family members to keep them in good health and save money.

Case-2:

Fatema is the elder daughter of her family. Her father is a green vegetable seller who has an income of 5,000.00 BDT monthly in their family of five members. They spent around 1,000.00 BDT in a month for their medical purpose. The younger children and mother are the vulnerable persons in this case. She studies in grade ten and knew about the importance of cleanliness.



Fatema's family, source of water and handwashing

As her mother is illiterate and less aware about health she often falls sick from various diseases. With her mother all the family members feel sick also. Fatema tells her mother several times about cleanliness but she doesn't follow her instructions. Their family income is very poor and it is very hard to run their family after the medical expenses have been paid for all.

In this situation she decided to take her mother to meet her the principal. He shows Fatema's mother how she can keep her family members safe from different diseases by adopting some habits of cleanliness. He also introduces Fatema's mother with a health officer at the local health complex.

Her mother totally understood about cleanliness and promised to wash her hands. Now she personally keeps herself clean as well as keep her family members clean.

This story reports the awareness of a student after the hand washing programme and her trust in seeking the help of the principal. When she could not herself change her mother's habit regarding cleanliness, she drew on the help of the principal to convince her mother to follow the process of cleanliness. It indicates an open and trustful relationship between Nazrul and students and also shows the principal's skills in motivating others.

Case-3:

Iqbal is the only son of this family. He lives with his granny and grandpa in one family. On account of better future of child father and mother both are service holder. They have a good income of 12,000.00 BDT monthly to run their family. But Iqbal remains sick most of the time just because of some bad habit like taking unhealthy food during tiffin period.



Iqbal's family, data collection and handwashing

After celebrating "Global Handwashing Day" he became more aware of his health. His friends also encouraged him to take unhealthy food from the vendor. Now he takes a bottle of saline and fruit juice during his tiffin time. With some fruits and home made snacks he finishes his tiffin. He is now fitter than previously.

This story in this third case demonstrates how Nazrul made students aware of the need to change their food habits. Whereas students were used to buying snacks from vendors who often have poor hygiene, the principal motivated them to bring tiffin from home.

Students developed a questionnaire and collected data by themselves. This enhanced their learning by doing action research in their own community. The survey became an active tool for learning about the community's problems analysing reasons and in finding solutions that could work. It allowed them to understand their community problems at a deeper level rather from the surface. Through the survey Nazrul was able to engage students with the community in a service activity that created learning opportunities and practical benefits for both, and so increased cohesion between the school and community. This is an implementation of the idea of service learning (Furco, 1996) where service and learning is ensured with an equal focus.

Although most students were aware of the importance of cleanliness, a lack of consciousness about the kind of snacks they might have during tiffin period was evident at school, and those snacks also caused sickness for some students. Nazrul found a new space to encourage students to change their eating habits.

Healthy eating, disease beating

Although students eat their main meals at home, many like to eat snacks during tiffin time, and they buy these from outdoor vendors. In these outdoor shops, beverages and snacks with unhealthy ingredients of oil, preservatives and chemicals are popular with students. *Street food* is displayed in the open and can be easily contaminated. These foods caused many students to become sick.

Nazrul was aware of this food issue because he had worked for the nutrition project for slum people and he was determined to make his students aware of the risks. So he developed a programme for students named '*Healthy Eating, Disease Beating*' to encourage them to change their eating habits. However, because many families in the community have low incomes, it was important to consider their ability to prepare affordable healthy food. Nazrul created an opportunity for students to visit one network school in the Connecting Classrooms project to learn about vegetable growing. The school is affiliated with an agricultural university in Bangladesh. During the visit, students learned about the cultivation process of some common vegetables such as potatoes and tomatoes. Students received practical knowledge on how to make the growing bed, how to prepare seeds, how to take care of plants, and what sprays to use.



Photo 111: Motivating students for healthy food (ISAP, 2012, p. 15)

Along with this initiative, the principal engaged one teacher to teach students how to cook healthy food. The Home Economics teacher, Mrs. Khanam, is

responsible for food and nutrition teaching in the school. She advises students to bring homemade food for their tiffin and demonstrates how to prepare quick and healthy meals. In developing recipes, she considers the cost, nutrition and preparation time so that meals are nutritious, affordable and relatively easy to prepare. Because of the time-effective process and their learning about cleanliness from the hand-washing programme, students are encouraged to bring healthy tiffin from home rather than buy snacks at outdoor shops.

In this way Nazrul involves students in experiential learning in order to teach about the Home Economics and Science curriculum. Previously these urban students had only had rare opportunities to see and learn about the process of growing vegetables. Nazrul's networking has promoted such an opportunity for them. Although similar content is included in the curriculum, Shanjeebon School offers students a chance to learn about healthy eating in a practical and highly motivating way.

Working for a green environment

Nazrul recognised the importance of making students aware of air pollution and the necessity of tree planting because they live in an industrial area. As a part of this awareness, the school now celebrates *Tree Plantation Day* every year. The principal developed a project whereby a daylong rally is set up beside the nearby highway to distribute plants, called 'Tree Plantation Camp'. On that day Nazrul invites the community to join the students in planting trees, so raising an awareness of the role trees play in transforming carbon dioxide into oxygen. Students get theoretical knowledge like this in their science classes but usually schools do not organise such programmes.

Sometimes, with the finance from other projects such as Connecting Classrooms, the principal organised free plants to distribute to the community youth. He selected young people to receive the free plants because older people are normally too busy with their office and family work. According to Nazrul, "When

all the family members are busy in their family work and they have no time for taking care of plants, community youth have some time to do that work". The reason for setting up the distribution camp beside the highway was to encourage other people to plant trees as well. Tree camps were arranged during the rainy season because that is the best time to plant trees.



Photo 12: Tree Plantation Day observance (ISAP, 2012, p. 9)

After distributing the plants, the students and youth came to the school and the principal gave a motivational speech about why and how to take care of plants. He described trees as free oxygen factories and explained why everybody should take care of trees. Students were asked to keep a watchful eye on the trees that had been planted since all the youth live near some of them. Nazrul declared that there would be rewards for the best tree (ISAP, 2012, p. 9):

This free oxygen factory is the future of our planet. I hope you will not let your future planet be destroyed at any cost. I will personally visit each of your homes after a month to observe how you are taking care of your plants. I will reward the best tree with an exciting prize.

The tree plantation programme provides a reciprocal way to engage students with the community and to attract community youth in learning good habits that preserve their environment. With the motivation and learning to care for the environment, the principal handed over responsibility to students in monitoring

the care of the plants. Such communal responsibility has potential to encourage students to think about issues and to support the people within their community.

Relief distribution

Because the Shanjeebon School is situated on the bank of a river, the community often experience floods during the rainy season. According to the principal, in 2011 a flood caused huge damage in the community. He encouraged his students to help flood-affected people. Students worked to raise funds from local leaders and businessmen. The students contributed well to raising funds and also collected funds from friends, family and community people. With the funds collected, teachers guided them to buy food and emergency goods. Then students packed one of each item in a packet to distribute to the people. Students described how they arranged all those things (ISAP, 2012, p. 10):

We raised funds from the local leaders and businessmen. We also raised them from people from different areas. We bought and packed *gur*, *muri*, saline, biscuits, water purifying tablets, banana, mosquito coil and matches etc. to distribute.

At the same time as these activities were contributing to student awareness of the need to care for others in the community, a number of other areas of learning were offered experientially, such as how to select emergency items during a flood, preparing budgets, buying those products and packaging them.



Photo 13: Relief distribution

Students were divided into five groups to distribute relief in different areas. They hired boats to go to the affected areas. Students shared their experience of relief distribution.

We passed the relief bags to the people. Some of them swam to the boat and received a bag from us. It feels very sad to see such situations and the living style of flood-affected people. But it feels good to see smiles on faces after having the relief bag from the relief boat.

-ISAP, 2012, p. 10

Relief distribution was a practical site-base experience for the students that touched their hearts. It demonstrated how student initiatives contributed to the community during a crisis period and how their little efforts brought happiness for the people of the community.

Nazrul encouraged groups to write down their thoughts as stories after coming back from the relief work and to submit them to their teachers. Below is one of the stories. It is from a group that learned about the reasons for floods and that made them promise to keep the river natural.

We came to school at 10.30. Though we planned to start at 11.00 it wasn't possible for the rain was coming in cats and dogs outside. At first we packed all the stuff (*gur, muri, saline, banana, water purifying tablets, biscuits, mosquito coil, match etc.*). Under the guidance of our school coordinator we visited the affected area flows in front of the school. A team of eleven members distributed relief to the people. People received relief from their window, from floating boat, and even swam to the boat. Every scenario touches our heart deeply in sorrow. We promised not to pollute the river anymore and raised awareness among the people not to do so as well.



Students are writing stories

Although using students to collect charity funds is a common practice in Bangladesh, encouraging them in writing about their feelings is not so usual. It served to nurture their values in developing social responsibility and in protecting nature. Content on river pollution is available in textbooks and there are many reasons mentioned for the cause of floods but the principal gave the students opportunity in get first-hand experiences of how a river is polluted and how that causes flooding. That made students realise the importance of preserving nature and keeping rivers safe. Such realisation may encourage students to learn other values that contribute to the wellbeing of society.

Engaging students in learning culture and history

Nazrul looks for opportunities to develop aspects of the curriculum to enable students to gain further experiential learning related to their community, culture and history. Although content on history and culture is included in textbooks, the school can teach it better by creating opportunities to provide practical experiences. So Nazrul has utilised a range of cultural, national and international celebrations. Many schools celebrate such events but do not explicitly provide opportunities for learning through these programmes. Nazrul's focus is both to celebrate and to develop student awareness of the value of their culture and history.

Mothers Day

Nazrul talked to me about the importance of family bonding for learning, especially between mother and child. He understands that learning is not possible if it is considered as only the responsibility of schools and if children and mothers do not have a mutual respect and love. There is no doubt that every mother loves her children and children love their mothers but in most cases they do not speak of their love. If the love is voiced, it could expand the power of relationships between the mothers and children. The powerful relationship between mother and child potentially could improve student learning with a

hope of better monitoring of children's learning at home. Considering such benefits, in 2011 Nazrul organised the Mothers Day celebration as a way to *Speak out the Love*.



Photo 14: Celebrating International Mothers Day

All mothers and students were invited to school on the Mothers Day to participate in this programme. The principal asked his students first about the importance and contribution of mothers in their lives and then asked mothers to talk about the achievements of their children. Nazrul reported it to me as a very emotional occasion, but as well as recounting the way it affirmed mother-child relationships he emphasised how the school's participation in the celebration forged stronger home-school ties.

Students began to speak about their love to their mothers, realising their struggle for their care and development. They also acknowledged their misbehaviour and its impact on their mothers and tears came out from their eyes. One student expressed love in following words (ISAP, 2012, p. 24):

Ma (mother), after my birth I've never felt how much you've done for me. When I knew, I found myself to be the most guilty person in the world. When I didn't know what you have done in my life, I've given you so much intolerable pain. I never respected or listened to your love carefully. Today as I came to know all of my faults, please forgive me for all my bad behaviour I've done to you. I promise from today I'll be only a reason of smile in your life.

After hearing the stories mothers also were tearful. Some of them went to the stage and expressed their love for their child. One mother said:

Yes it is true you've given me so much pain but today I'm feeling proud for that where you stand for me. I've never received flowers from anyone in my whole life, but today you have presented me a bunch. I'm honoured today and forgot all my pain that I've tolerated during your birth. I'm happy today being a mother of a child like you. Almighty bless you.

-ISAP, 2012, p. 24

The 'Speak out the Love' programme formalised a means for students to express their appreciation of their mothers, and Nazrul reported that this made a significant impact on student commitment to their schooling. It heightened student awareness that their performance at school could make their mothers happy and it led mothers to more active monitoring of their children's progress in school.

Mother Language Day, Independence Day and Victory Day

Bangladesh celebrates in its national identity in three important commemorative dates. They are: Mother Language Day when the nation remembers those who gave their lives to retain its language, Bangla; Independence day when Bangladesh began its war to gain independence from Pakistan; and Victory Day when it finally achieved its freedom. All educational institutions celebrate these days in some way and textbooks use accounts of these days in many subject fields.

Nazrul saw an opportunity to make these celebrations further opportunities for holistic learning. He delegated some of the planning to students. He gave a student team responsibility for developing plans for the programmes, drawing up budgets and implementing them successfully. Nazrul recalled the way he motivated students to plan for Mother Language Day.

I told them: Last year you observed everything that we did and how we did it for this programme. This year I want to see that you are able to arrange the programme in your way. Teachers are ready to guide and help you where needed.

Since students were already used to take some active roles, they were happy to take responsibility for arranging this programme and were eager to make it successful.



Photo 1512: International Mother Language Day Observance

Nazrul ensured teacher guidance to make the programme successful so that students are motivated to continue taking further responsibility in the future. The principal talked about how the students organised the day.

Very early in the morning students gathered in the school field with lots of flowers, to show their best love for language. They participated in a rally called *provat feri* around the community to make the people aware. They also participated in a prayer for these who devoted their lives in 1952. They showed them respect and love with infant flowers and song.

-ISAP, 2012, p. 28

Bangladesh achieved independence from Pakistan in 1971 through a liberation war that lasted for nine months. Nazrul used these celebration days to lift history out of the textbook and gave students an opportunity to express their reflections of the importance of the culture, values and events that were celebrated. He

usually starts the programmes with an explanation of what the day meant. For example, in 2011 the principal began the Independence Day as follows.

A country is not only made by the land; it needs people, culture, education, traditions, celebration, communication, religion and socialism. When a country is made this way people love and respect it. If someone wants to destroy the land or people of that country, people do not let it be at any cost. They can dedicate their life or wealth to save their motherland. We've such a story for this day. Many of our youth devoted their lives to make this country free from the devil and snatch independence for the people of this country. They made us proud to the world as Bangladeshi.

-ISAP, 2012, p. 25



Photo 136: Observing Independence Day

Then the principal arranged a range of activities through which students could learn their history through participation, such as a rally, song and art competitions and dance performances. To display student writing and creativity, they published a wall magazine of student writing. In all the competitions, participating students were rewarded with educational tools and stationery. In selecting the competition topics, Nazrul related them to the theme of the day and made links with the content in textbooks, that also was intended to enable students learn to value and respect their history and culture. The principal explained the organisation.

When we arrange a competition for different celebrations we select topics very consciously relating our heritage and culture. We have our own history and tradition in art, music and celebration. So the topics must be focused on the tradition of our country and culture.

Experiential learning involves feelings as well as accounts of facts. Nazrul arranged the school's celebrations to provide opportunities for building student leadership and for students to have an opportunity to translate the pride in their history described in textbooks into their personal experience of talking about or acting out aspects of their culture and history.

Pohela Boishakh (Bangla New Year)

Besides national and international days, students in Shanjeebon School are actively engaged in other traditional cultural programmes, such as *Pohela Boishakh* (the first day of Bangla New Year), and *Basant Utsab* (the first day of spring).

Nationally *Pohela Boishakh* is celebrated in colourful dress, special foods, plans made for the coming year and community *mela* (open air fair). Shopkeepers close their tally book for the previous year and start a new one. An integral part of the programmes is the *Mongol Shobhajatra*, a traditional colourful procession, with a new theme each year relevant to traditional culture and present politics.

Nazrul follows the tradition and central theme in organising his students to celebrate *Pohela Boishakh*. He explained how he asks students to dress for the day.

All the students wear traditional *saree* and *panjabi* to show their *Bangaliana* (Bangali culture). They wear white saree with red *par*. Boys wear yellow or red *panjabi*. All of them decorate the programme in a traditional way. It reflects the colour of Bangladeshi culture.

The principal encourages students to perform traditional songs and dances to show the variety of cultures they come from. The programme closes with a meal where students and teachers enjoy the traditional food *panta ilish*.



Photo 17: Pohela Boishakh celebration

Although many schools acknowledge festival days in some way, celebrations are often formal due to constraints of money and other demands on time. Nazrul has resolved some of the pressures of time by engaging students in organisation so not only is his time saved but also students develop planning and leadership skills. Nazrul's intention in this and other festival celebrations is to ensure students can participate in planning the day and in taking part in activities that are both fun and also serve as experiential teaching tools. The aim is for the students to learn about the values of their culture.

Pitha Utsab (Cake festival)

Bangladesh has a tradition of making and enjoying a large number of *pitha*, homemade cakes, in the six seasons. Over the years urban life is getting increasingly busy causing traditions to gradually disappear from cities. Nazrul talked to me about the way he used the festival to teach students to understand and preserve their culture.

Although students can find names of cakes in textbooks, in many cases they have few opportunities to make these cakes at home. While there is a specific course

of Home Economics at senior school level, many schools lack the resources to teach the making processes effectively. Nazrul arranged a *pitha utsab* for all students in his school so that they had the opportunity to make the various cakes that are part of their local and national cultural heritage.

We are losing our culture continuously. Traditionally our culture was full of different foods, especially various cakes. Children used to learn preparing those cakes from their mothers. Now this culture is losing its heritage because parents are busy. To introduce them to different cakes and help students in learn the preparation, we organised *pitha utsab* in our school.

For that festival, students first learned to make the cakes at home and on the festival day they had to make it in the school grounds for sale. A SMC member supported such initiative because it added cultural value in their children learning. Zakir, SMC member, advocated for Nazrul's initiatives.

Our principal is aware to preserve our heritage and culture. His recent initiative of *pitha utshab* encouraged students to know and learn about different *pithas* in Bangladesh: how to make them and how they taste.

The students had total freedom in choosing their cake to make. Some mothers accompanied their children to school to assist in making the cakes. Many parents and community members came to buy and taste the cakes made by students.



Photo 18: Preparing, selling and buying in Pitha Utsab

Nazrul's initiative not only created opportunities for students to learn practically about the traditional cakes mentioned in their textbooks, it also provided further opportunities to engage parents in their children's learning. Parents were asked to teach their children how to prepare traditional cakes and people from across the community came to observe and buy, what had been made. The festival strengthened the relationship between school and community.

Religious harmony and cultural participation

People in Bangladesh show their honour and respect to all religions. National policy declares holidays on the specific celebrations for the main four religions. Within their formal school programme students from different religions get the chance to study their own religious texts. Nazrul pointed out that the school's duty was to prepare them to respect other religions, to keep harmony in society. He explained how the school involved students in respecting other religions.

We celebrate different religious festivals such as Eid-ul-Fitr, Durga Puja to inform our students about the culture of religions. All the students participate and enjoy the festivals. These programs encourage the building of good relationships among students, and to keep harmony in society.

He also talked to me about sending students, with teacher guidance, to cultural festivals outside the school grounds to visit nearby religious programmes that were open to all such as *Durga Puja*, the main religious celebration of Hindus. While many schools recognise the value of teaching students to respect other religions than their own, the organisation of these kinds of programmes requires time and money. Nazrul's commitment to these celebrations is a matter of strategic educational choice.

Nazrul also involves his students in cultural festivals to further encourage experiential learning about social, cultural, historical and religious values. Zakir, a SMC member, admired Nazrul's leadership in broadening such activities in the school.

A credibility for this principal is his initiatives of starting cultural programmes widely in school. In the past there was little opportunity to participate and learn cultural activities in this school. Now we have a teacher for music and dance. Besides, we celebrate different national and international days and student participate in reciting, debate, essay writing, painting and so on.

Nazrul has also established clubs in the school such as the Debating Club, Rotary Club, Scouts and Girls Guides. All these clubs provide opportunities for developing creativity in addition to regular class learning. He noted that through these extra-curricular activities, students gain confidence as well as developing specific skills.

There are different clubs in this school. For example, there is a debating club, and a girl power club that looks after girls with feminine issues. The girl power club is also part of internal cluster committee. So they look after their team members. If something is wrong with any member, the leader tries to find out the problem, and might even talk to her family if needed. And talk to a teacher or to me for a solution when necessary. There are some social development projects. Children have been ready to work through those projects. In my school 32 boys and 32 girls are involved in scouts. They are very dedicated. They are ready to do any job with confidence.

These internal clubs clearly have potential to develop student skills and attitudes through curricular and extra-curricular learning. To implement them a principal needs to have strong relationships with his teachers to inspire them to lead these clubs and to guide students. Chapter Six described the relationship between the principal and teachers and showed how teachers guided students in learning through different projects.

Extra-curricular activities and creative learning

From my own observation and experience, many teachers, parents and students in Bangladesh consider extra-curricular activities a waste of time. Perhaps they have not had opportunities to see their positive impact. However, in his school Nazrul has successfully encouraged students to participate in such activities and demonstrated their benefits.

Students in Shanjeebon School believe that extra-curricular activities enrich their learning of the content in textbooks and in answering the questions in examinations creatively. Sonia, a student leader, reported how the extra-curricular activities helped her to answer questions in the recently implemented creative question method.

It helps to develop our creative ideas that we require for better achievement in examinations since we are going through creative question method. Though we can get directions in guidebooks from the market, answering in a right way and presenting nicely depends on our creativity. Cultural programmes enhance our art of presentation.

Although this student did not explain exactly how extra-curricular activities developed creativity, an important consideration was that she was not relying on the commercial notebooks. A measure of Nazrul's success is, that he is able to encourage his students to break their reliance on the commercial examination notebooks particularly as the government is battling to stop the publication and usage of such notebooks.

Nazrul sees the development of clubs as opportunities for students in the school to be engaged with society, to think about their community, to consider social problems and to look at ways to overcome the problems. He considers that club activities could develop students to develop as critical thinkers.

One example of how the students develop as critical thinkers in Shanjeebon School was evident in a drama that was written, directed and staged by students. The students selected a social issue from their community to show their understanding of society. Below is the story from the school document (ISAP, 2012, p. 17).

GOPA (Drama)

Story of unstoppable merit...

Summery of the story:

He is a boy of 15yrs old. Living with his dumb mother in a hut. His mother works as a housemaid in a house near the city. With a hard adjustment his mother manages the fees of exam for him. When he was in school, got a message that his mother is seriously fall in sick. As it was the last date of submission, he request one of his friend to deposit the fees on behalf of him. He then runs to the landlord where his mother worked, for help. Landlord said if he works instead of his mother then she'll help him. He agreed and received the money, purchase medicine and return to home. He found his mother sick on bed. He gives her medicine and started preparation for the exam next day. In term of entire situation his friend didn't pay his exam fee but played gamble besides road and lost all the money. When he comes to know that his friend cheated with him he asked why he did so. His friend said he was jealous on his good result each time. As he was promised to do all the work instead of his mother, he kept his promises and started to work as a housemaid after that. It was necessary to purchase medicine every day for his mother so he started to sell popcorn and candy floss also. One day the daughter of landlord stuck in a math problem and Gopal solved the problem. She surprised and come to know that Gopal is a meritorious student but fails to sit for his JSC (Junior School Certificate) exam. She also watches Gopal's struggle on road. She then talks with her school head about the exam of Gopal and her school head give Gopal a chance to complete his study. Gopal sit for exam and do best in the board. On term of best result he also achieved a scholarship to study in London.

This drama illustrates the practical aspect of student involvement in that it was entirely written and produced by students. It also shows the aspirational aspect: the scriptwriters admire the struggle for education. Although it is recognised that the examination system in Bangladesh does not encourage students to learn social and cultural values and to think critically about their community issues (Mariam & Farooqui, 2008), Nazrul sets an example of how a principal can ensure that students to learn in these areas. Despite the fact that the students live in an underprivileged area and attend a school that has limited resources, in such a context the principal is enabling them to develop as creative learners and leaders who will be ready to face challenges in their society.

Aligning Nazrul's practices with context and literature

This chapter has explored the innovative ways the principal has engaged students in learning and leading at school, and in their family and community. The engagement strategies and the ways students are involved are summarised in the model below.

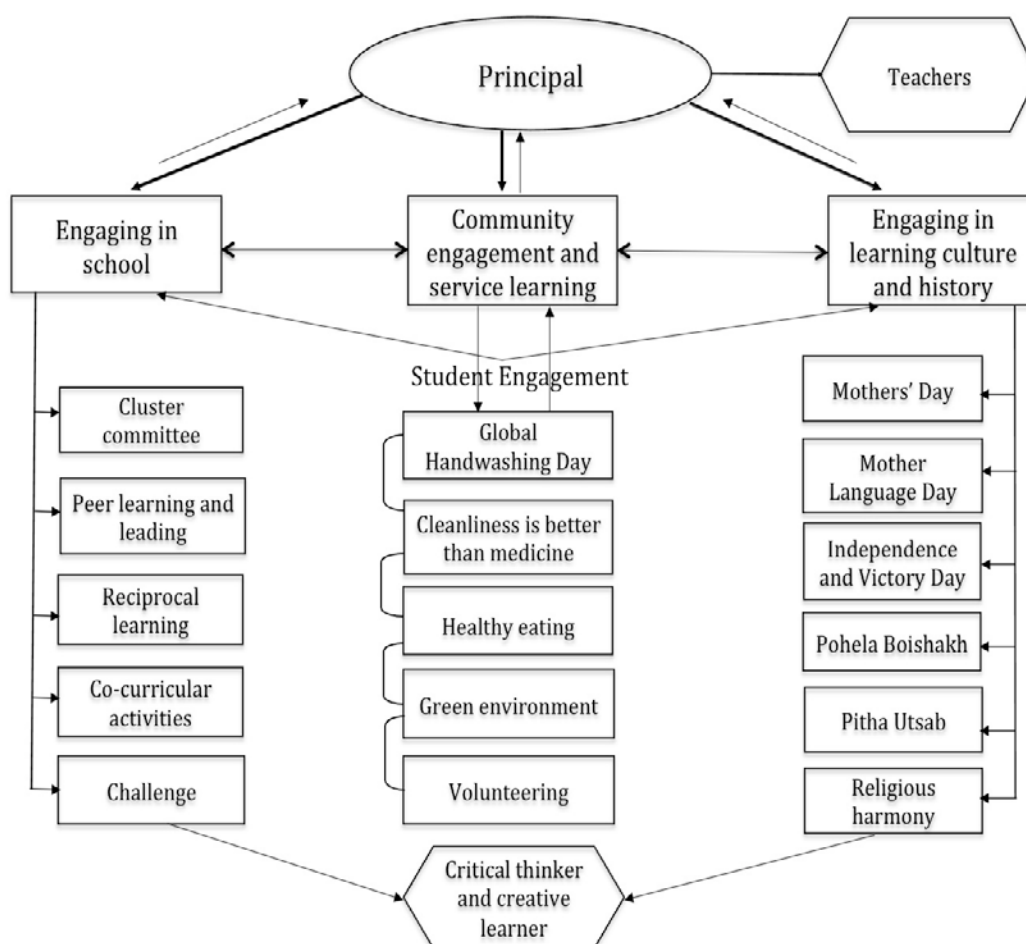


Figure 7: Principal leadership and student engagement in Shanjeebon School

As shown in the framework, the initiatives taken by Nazrul are broadly divided into three areas i.e. student learning at school; service learning in the community; and learning culture and history. Engagement in school is focused on improving teaching and learning in class, engaging students with service learning enhances community engagement and promoting a sense of civic

responsibility. Involvement with history and culture nourishes their cultural values and their commitment to the nation. Through these processes the principal creates an experiential base for learning and for developing good citizens who will be creative in thinking and dedicated to the wellbeing of society and nation.

Student engagement in learning and leading is highlighted as an important element in the development of student achievement (Archard, 2009; Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; Hine, 2013). It is widely recognised in national (Mariam & Farooqui, 2008) and international literature (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008; Bundick, Quaglia, Corso, & Haywood, 2014) that students can be bored, unmotivated and disengaged from the academic and social aspects of school life. Nazrul has set an example of how to engage his students in curricular and extra-curricular activities in various ways.

Supporting classroom learning

Narratives in this chapter show that Nazrul has set up strategies to improve student learning in class. Often, due to national practices and social attitudes, many principals feel powerless to override the prevailing culture of class grouping and student status based on roll numbers even though these roll numbers hinder learning progress; but this principal introduced the idea of student clusters as a way of overcoming the problem. These clusters have created an environment where students across the range of academic achievement are grouped together. By taking responsibility for their group members' achievement and by reporting back to teachers, cluster leaders follow a process to ensure the learning of group members. They are contributing to the overall learning achievement in the school.

Mulford (2010) and Taylor and Parsons (2011) advocated that improving student learning achievement should be the main focus of student engagement at school. While many teachers and schools see the mandate by the Bangladesh

government to develop a participatory learning approach through building relationships between teachers and students as difficult or even illusionary, Nazrul's initiative in developing and facilitating student clusters shows a pathway to how effective participation in class can be achieved. If students are more engaged in the classroom, they are likely to perform better in learning including getting higher grades (Appleton et al., 2008; Finn & Rock, 1997). Both the students' active participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities and their recent results in public examination testify to improved student engagement in Shanjeebon School.

Nazrul puts effort into encouraging students to build relationships among themselves and with teachers and parents to support their learning. In the classroom context, the close seating arrangement of the members in a cluster and their engagement in peer discussion provides a platform for development of relationships within the group. The processes of mentoring and monitoring of learning within the group enhance the building of trust in relationships. Where strong competition among high achieving students was evident in secondary schools (Ilon, 2000), as was separating the elite achievers from the rest of the students, Nazrul has found a way to successfully engage achievers in helping others to achieve. Communicating with teachers and parents regarding problems within clusters, such as difficulties understanding a concept or absenteeism, promotes the development of relationships. In cases where cluster leaders might develop a dominant or unfair manner, careful monitoring by teachers and the principal allows remedial action, and in most cases, reduces the probability of abuse of the role. So trustful relationships have developed among students that promote collaboration in learning.

The cluster system and improved relationships enhance co-operative learning in class that makes it easier for students to understand course content. The content is often criticised for not meeting the practical or applied needs of students because the curriculum is centrally prescribed (Ilon, 2000). Teachers do not have time to carry out individual mentoring in a large class so there is little scope for

curriculum content to be well understood by students. Although all secondary teachers receive in-service pedagogical training and are expected to deliver content effectively, in many cases their initial educational background, poor physical facilities and lack of professional rewards make it difficult for them to engage students in class. If students “do not feel efficacious and their academic self-concept is low, they are likely to feel less invested in and more anxious about their performance” (Bundick et al., 2014, p. 10). The system that now offers peer support in learning in Shanjeebon School is an example of how students can develop their confidence in subject content and feel connected to it. It also allows teachers to offer more time for individual mentoring through assistance from student leaders.

Mariam and Farooqui (2008) and Ahmed et al., (2007) argued that the majority of students in secondary schools in Bangladesh are physically present in class but intellectually absent. Such virtual exclusion or disengagement is identified in a number of countries round the world (Bundick et al. 2014; Willms, 2003). Arguably, studies show that effective peer relationships can improve student adjustment at school and active participation in class and that these will in turn enhance academic achievement (Berndt & Keefe, 1995; Brown, 1990; Dempster, 2011; Parker & Asher, 1987). Many students feel too shy to talk in class and consider themselves incapable of talking to teachers to query anything, but now the system of peer support for learning offers a comfort zone allowing these students to learn from their friends. Ryan and Patrick (2001) stressed that students actively engage in learning when they feel encouraged to seek knowledge, gain comfort interacting with each other and when teachers value their ideas. Nazrul has enabled his students to experience active learning by changing the classroom culture from individualistic to collaborative.

Service and experiential learning

A defining focus of Nazrul’s leadership is developing student learning through linking the content of the curriculum to practical experiences. He extends

student learning beyond the teaching that takes place inside the classroom itself by attaching importance to direct experiences in students' lives. Secondary education in Bangladesh is largely oriented towards examinations which mainly test student recall (UNESCO, 2011), but Nazrul extends this with experiential learning. Significant examples of experiential learning in Shanjeebon School include the hand washing and healthy food programmes. Students have learned a satisfactory way of hand washing and see the direct impact it has on their actual lives. Similarly, they see that learning how to grow and cook healthy food can keep them well. The principal links their learning of curriculum content with practical applications. Kolb (1984) and Zhang and Fang (2015) argued that experiential learning shapes and actualises developmental potentialities of students and helps to create better lives. Nazrul has successfully promoted experiential learning as a way to help students implement concepts they learn in actual practices at home and at school and to motivate their families to maintain similar good habits.

Nazrul has linked the student learning of history and culture to contextual experiences of celebrations and festivals. Although Mariam and Farooqui (2008) claimed Bangladesh secondary students were disengaged in learning the values of history and culture, by taking a more experiential approach Nazrul has involved his students in celebrating national and international programmes. He gives them responsibility and encourages them to take leadership roles. In this way he has reduced the likelihood of disengagement. His innovative ideas for celebration days, such as Mothers' Day, have nourished cultural, social and interpersonal values amongst students. Thomson (2010) stressed that, "Students value the opportunity to gain a wider perspective on their education" (p. 814). Nazrul effectively initiated co-curricular opportunities for students to put their culture and values into practice. Many educational theorists and researchers (including Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984; Yardley, Teunissen, & Dorman, 2012) advocated for active engagement to enable students to gain experience and applied knowledge. Students in Shanjeebon School demonstrate their applied

knowledge as they successfully take responsibility for organising festival programmes.

Students, led by Nazrul, are directed to apply their classroom learning to a real world situation by performing much needed community services. Tree planting, cleanliness and relief work are significant examples. These projects link course content to real life and community service. For instance, action research on community cleanliness allowed students not only to understand the need for the cleanliness, but also to practice processes of inquiry and to learn about life styles, family budgets and medical expenses. Teachers reported that the project developed their research skills and thinking about social issues. The tree plantation project linked their theoretical knowledge to the importance of taking personal responsibility to make their community safe from carbon emissions.

These forms of learning align with the concept of service learning. Morgan and Streb (2001) defined service learning as a process by which students apply their classroom learning to real world situations. Enos and Troppe (1996) contended that service learning provides opportunities to learn beyond the classroom boundaries. The way students in Shanjeebon School are involved in community service and learn from them is a combination of the above factors: applying classroom learning to community and learning from community service. Furco (1996) argued that service learning, “ensure equal focus on both the service being provided and the learning that is occurring” (p. 5).

Service learning enhances the growth of civic sense in students and their ability to take social responsibility. Cleaning their own classrooms and standing beside the community during a flood are distinct examples of their social values and the way they can take on responsibilities. Extra-curricular activities also make a noticeable difference to student achievement. Dempster (2011) argued that participation in social work and responsibility are interweaving factors that develop social, emotional and cognitive attributes and enhance academic achievement. The community service in Shanjeebon School fosters the students’

sense of belongingness to their community and makes them clear about the goal of learning in practical life. Some other research (Claxton, 2007; Taylor & Parsons, 2011) stressed the importance of engaging students with community to show the purpose of their learning and the application to real life situations where they live. Elbertson, Brackett and Weissberg (2010) argued that schools are responsible for preparing students not only for school tests but also for developing skills required for life. This chapter has shown that Nazrul is developing his students to be ready to achieve good marks as well as to serve their community.

Another defining characteristic of the principal is how he creates opportunities for developing leadership skills in students. There is an expectation in the education policy that students should develop skills at school to be able to set their life goals, make decisions, take up challenges and solve problems (MOE, 2010). By engaging students actively in leading their peers and taking responsibilities to serve the community, the principal has opened the door to nurture these skills. Because developing student leadership has strong positive impacts on individual achievement at school and in life (Hine, 2013; Karnes & Stephens, 1999), internationally there has been a call to examine the readiness of schools to provide student leadership opportunities (Dempster & Lizzio, 2007; McNae, 2011). Nazrul actively involves students in leadership resulting in improved academic achievement. Although students, as yet, have not had the chance to be engaged in whole school decision-making processes, they were treated as active agents in the processes of increasing student participation in learning.

Many in Bangladesh limit their vision of student leadership to some stereotypic roles such as raising funds for charity or complaining about litter, similar to those that Holdsworth (2013) identified in an Australian context, but Nazrul has extended the roles to facilitate and lead the learning of their peers. Lizzio, Dempster and Neumann (2011) and McNae (2011) considered students as an integral part of a distributed conception of leadership to facilitate learning in

schools. So, finding out more active ways to engage students effectively in school leadership may further extend the learning in Shanjeebon School. McNae (2011) and Mitra (2003) argued that schools are more likely to hear about learning needs if students are actively engaged in leadership. Although the cluster system has allowed students to be heard, their participation in wider decision-making might well further benefit teaching and learning in the school.

Active participation in learning and leadership has the potential for students to develop critical thinking as they learn through experience. The account of the drama production represents students as critical thinkers because they developed the story on a social issue, performed and directed it themselves and were able to make it meaningful for the audience. Fielding (2004) and Skinner, Lizzio and Dempster (2011) advocated giving importance to extra-curricular activities to develop students as active learners. However, facilitating such activities is impossible for just one leader acting on his own. For the quality and success of innovation in schools, leaders need to give ownership of leading and learning to students and teachers (Dimmock & Goh, 2011). That is why Nazrul delegates his leadership to his students and teachers in situations where they work as a community for building creative learners. Taylor and Parsons (2011) contend that the present world requires creative and critical thinkers, courageous innovators and life-long learners. In the accounts reported in this chapter, Nazrul has manifested examples of building students as critical thinkers.

This chapter identifies a number of strategies where the principal has created opportunities for improved student learning in the classroom and developed an experiential base for learning through community services. The key aspects of the principal's approach identified in this study are summarised in Figure 8 and described below.

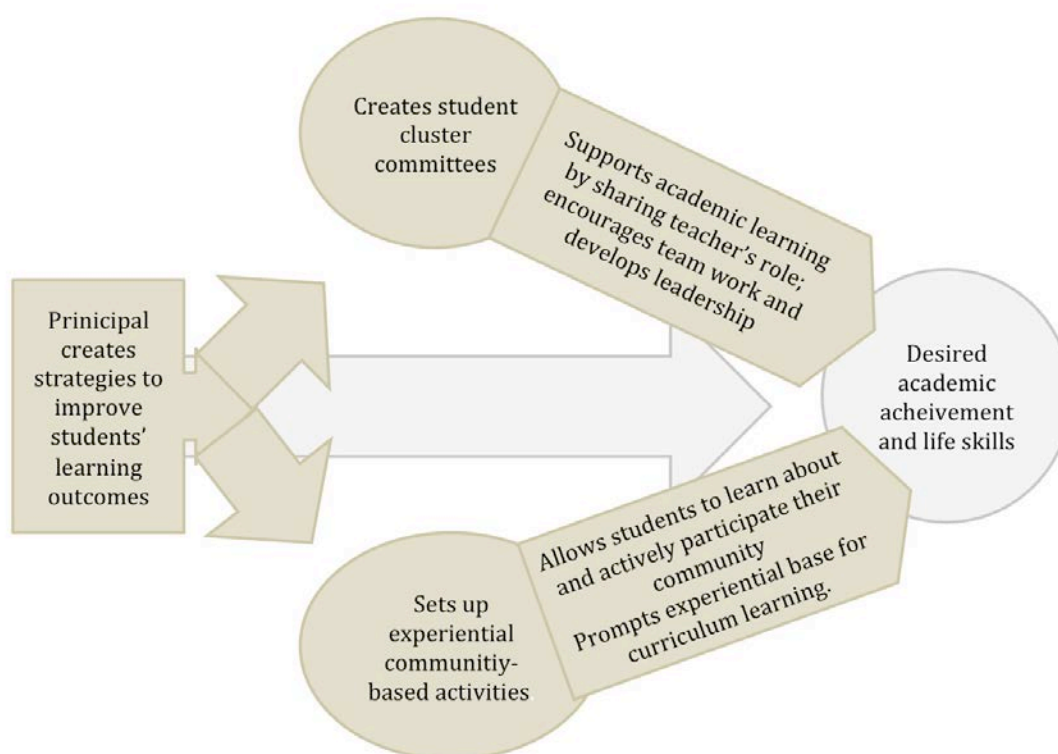


Figure 8: Principal leadership for student learning

All the components in the model relate to student learning. Aspect one relates to academic achievement. It encapsulates Nazrul's ideas for reorganising classroom practices to increase student participation in learning. The distinctive element is that the principal created an environment where teachers and students are ready to work collaboratively and are happy to share power and responsibility. Building a trustful relationship is central. The cluster system allows students to support each other, in sharing the teacher role and in developing their leadership through a relationship where teachers value students and students become interested in classroom learning. The process has led to improved achievement in examinations.

Another aspect is related to the experiential learning that links theoretical learning to real life. At the core of this aspect is the operation of an active intelligence that relate curriculum content to community issues and sets out a

practical plan of action. It allows students to learn about their community issues and creates scope to participate actively and to work towards resolving problems. It provides an experiential base for students to develop life skills, including skills they might not yet require at their present stage.

Closing comments

This chapter has woven together the personal skills and strategies of Nazrul in improving student learning and distributing leadership amongst the students. Whereas nationally students are considered to be disengaged and policy does not provides a process to motivate and develop social and cultural values, Nazrul has involved his students as active participants in classroom learning and in so doing has built social and cultural values through experiential learning. There is a clear indication of a strong relationship between the school and community that the principal developed to facilitate students' ability to gain experience from community services. The next chapter examines the principal's strategies in engaging the broader community with the school.

Chapter Eight

School and Community: A two-way process of development

When I talked to the parents in Shanjeebon School, it was apparent that the school had become a significant force in the community. They consider that the status of the school their children attend impacts on their status and their children's status, not only at graduation but also as they continue their schooling. They also believe that a school with a strong reputation makes the whole community look better. Nazrul had considered that parents and wider community engagement would facilitate students learning and that a stronger, healthier and educated community would enrich the school. Development of school and community links was occurring as a reciprocal process.

In this chapter I explain how Nazrul has built relationships and respect between the school and community by reshaping communication to parents and creating experiential learning opportunities for students through community services. It begins by examining how Nazrul set up structures to let parents feel comfortable about coming to school to meet him and his teachers. It explores how Nazrul motivated parents to see the school as an important organisation for their community. It identifies challenges that emerged during the process of engagement and how the principal overcame them. Discussion about the interweaving relationships between the school and community revisits examples described in earlier chapters. The ideas Nazrul instigated have been linked to both the local context and the international literature. A model of Nazrul's leadership strategies that involve parents with the school to support student learning and the community simultaneously is offered at the end of this chapter.

Creating trust and a positive environment for parents

From experience Nazrul was aware of the prevailing bureaucracy that parents face when meeting the principal and teachers in large schools and its potential negative impact on building relationships with parents. In Chapter Five I noted how he took away the meeting schedule notification from his door on the first day and introduced open access for people to meet with him. He thought that the previous principal either did not like to meet parents or did not consider to provide access at suitable for parents to meet him. A large number of parents were not connected to the school for other reasons, such as illiteracy, inflexibility because of employment commitments and lack of awareness of the role parents can play. So the principal had to find out the causes that create barriers to involvement of parents with the school in order to address them.

Parents are a priority

According to Nazrul, more than 60% of the parents in Shanjeebon School are employed in garment factories. Normally garment workers work long hours each day for six days a week to raise their income to a survival level. So they lack time, energy and desire to attend to their children's education, seldom communicating with the school because of lack of flexibility in their work hours. The only possible time to visit the school is their lunchtime, between 1.00pm and 2.00pm. So this principal made himself available at this time so many parents were able to visit him either on their way to home or way back to office.

Most of the parents in my school are from a lower income class. Mothers in most families are jobholders due to contextual reality. 60% of the mothers work in the garment factories. To meet these mothers I stay in my office from 1.00pm to 2.00pm so they can visit my office in their tiffin (lunch) time. They meet me either on the way to home or way back to office after having tiffin.

I observed an example of the principal interacting with a parent during a visit at his office at lunchtime. The mother asked the principal for suggestions about how she could help her son at home.

My son is irregular in studying at home these days. He often watches television. I seek your suggestions to make him attentive in learning. I felt a need to talk to you. And I would like to thank you, sir, since you are present at office at this time. This is difficult for me to get time to come and visit you beyond my lunchtime.

Nazrul began to meet parents to develop relationships with them. He thinks that parents need ease of access to him to share their views and ideas about their children, about teaching and learning in the school and to develop trust in communication with the school. If they are not sure about the school, they will not send their children there. According to Nazrul, a lack of trust impacts student learning. He noted, "I told my colleagues that if parents cannot meet and talk to me then they would not trust me and would not send their children to this school. So any parent can come and talk to me anytime".

In Bangladesh, few schools focus on building relationships with parents. In general parents do not have easy access to school authorities. Some principals often make their position elite by appearing to be too busy, by communicating mostly with particular influential people and by doing administrative jobs rather allocating time to meet parents. Parents in most schools need prior permission to meet with the principal. Parents also know that the principal has limited time to meet with parents and to share ideas. To break these prevailing perceptions and this dilemma, Nazrul considers his role as one of service to parents so he stopped the requirement of prior permission to meet with him.

My duty is to serve the parents. They are not for me; I am for them. If I am available at my office, why do they need permission? Besides, taking permission and matching times for both also creates complexities. Any parent can enter into my office any time to discuss about his or her child's learning. They have easy access to my room and there is no bureaucratic process.

From my experience of other schools, parents usually discuss learning issues with the principal only as their last resort, in deference to the principal's superior position. Many parents also view school as a disparate organisation

where they are expected to wear formal dress to meet with the principal and teachers.

Valuing customs and making parents feel welcome

Sometimes cultural customs made parents feel uncomfortable about meeting with the principal in their ordinary clothes. Since Shanjeebon School is situated in a bazaar area many parents either work in shops or go to shops wearing *lungi* and *korta* (cultural dress). Previously this cultural dress was not considered as proper clothing to wear to meet the principal in Shanjeebon School. However if these parents visit the school on their way to their work place or to market, not having to change their clothes can save them time. So Nazrul invited them to come and visit him and teachers in their ordinary clothes and without any indecision.

Some parents come to the bazaar wearing a *lungi*. Some parents work around the school area in businesses such as shops. For social cultural reasons, they did not come to visit the principal wearing their regular dress. But when I opened my door and invited them to visit my office anytime, they have started to meet me.

Because I spent a reasonable time at the principal's office, I had opportunities to observe parents who came to visit him at different times of day. I tried to understand their level of comfort, noted the clothes they wore, their reasons to visit and how they talked to the principal. I saw how easily parents came to the principal's door and sought permission to come in wearing their ordinary clothes. In most cases they talked about their children.

The policies of open door access, using suitable time for parents and valuing local customs are building positive relationships between the school and parents. Nazrul's basic initiatives have also motivated teachers to consider parents as important stakeholders in student learning and to reconsider their usual communication to parents, now being willing to smile while talking with them, as discussed in Chapter Six. A process of working together between school

and parents was seeded then developed further by institutionalising the community partnership.

Developing structures to connect school and parents

Connecting parents to school was not an easy task for Nazrul. Parents in Shanjeebon School were not used to communicating with the principal and teachers due to their lack of education and lack of confidence. There was a limited relationship between the school and parents. The school did not know what the parents thought about the quality of education and the parents did not know what the school was providing for their children. So the principal had to motivate parents to connect them to school.

Initiating parents meetings

When Nazrul became principal of Shanjeebon School he found that teachers and SMC members blamed parents for the poor performance of students. As discussed in Chapter Five and Six, they considered that parents were not aware of their children's learning and did not support them with any effort at home. Nazrul agreed with them, but he asked a critical question about whether the SMC and teachers tried to make the parents aware of what might support children's learning or not. Because there was no designated meeting, parents seldom came to school to find out about their children, there was a gap of understanding between parents and the school. The principal knew he should consult parents about their children's learning needs and what their expectations of the school were if the school was to develop effective working relationships with them. So the principal arranged a coordination meeting with the parents of students in Grade Ten.

When I joined this school, everybody (teacher and SMC members) complained that parents were not aware of their children needs. I told them, parents are not aware because we did not make that happen. If we heard their needs, then their awareness would be developed. So I

called a coordination meeting on the 23rd day of my joining, especially for Grade Ten parents before the SSC examination.

The principal began with Grade Ten parents because those students were about to sit their first public examination (at that time). He wanted to improve their achievement in the public examinations as the results contribute to the reputation of the school and the principal. Every year some students failed the SSC examination. Though most of these students failed in their school test examination (a standard test conducted by school to assess students' ability before the SSC examination), they were often still sent to the external public examination due to political, social or personal reasons. The principal became strict about only sending students to the public examinations if students passed the test examination at school. To convince the parents he talked to them.

I stood firm on sending candidates to public examinations. Some SMC members had requested that you need to consider this candidate as she or he came to me and I do politics in this context. I made it clear that I would not send a student to the examination hall when she or he had failed in the school test examination. I started to do this from the very beginning. Before I stopped sending failing students to examination hall, I did some groundwork. I arranged a coordination meeting with parents.

Although the new rule on sending students to public examinations put the principal and teachers under pressure, Shanjeebon School began a new journey towards learning improvement. Previously students and parents used to go to SMC members or to the principal after failing to get permission to sit for public examination. Now students were required to pass the test examination at school first. This strategy potentially made parents aware of their children's learning. Eventually it enhanced student learning as well as the public examination results for Shanjeebon School.

I observed such a request for a 'non-achieving' student while I was in the principal's office. One mother came to the principal and requested permission for her daughter to sit the upcoming SSC examination. The mother said, "My

daughter got married recently and could not come to school. She would like to sit for the SSC examination". The principal did not give permission because he was thinking about the school's performance. According to Nazrul, if he gave permission to the girl, then the school would not continue to maintain its pass rate at 100%. In addition, he thought others would be discouraged in their learning following this instance since they had alternative ways to sit in the public examination. Though permission could be expected due to humanitarian consideration, the principal made the decision to maintain the schools' reputation and what was best for the student, because this student's lack of preparation for the examination would result in failure.

Getting the parents to attend the meeting

Because parents were not used to communicating with the school, getting them to attend the parent meeting was not easy. According to Nazrul, first he considered a convenient time for parents. Then he had a strategy to ensure their attendance, he used a registration form to track attendance.

I did apply a technique. I made a registration form for parents. On the left there was the student roll number and name. In the middle, there was the father's or mother's name (who the student had identified as attending). At right there was a signature box to sign and then date. I arranged the meeting on a Friday (weekend in BD) so that parents could come easily.

The principal talked to students in the two sections of Grade Ten. He tried to motivate them to talk to their parents about how important the meeting was. He explained the necessity of attending the parent meeting. He showed students the registration form and told students they were responsible for making sure their parents attended.

I told students this is the paper where your name and your parent's name are written. Your parent needs to come and join the meeting. At the school gate, she or he will tell your roll and name and then upon signing at place she or he can get in. Those who will be absent, the respective student will have to explain the reasons for not coming. It

was a new initiative. The parents had never been invited to a meeting where they needed to be registered.

According to Nazrul and teachers, parent attendance was beyond expectation. Even more parents came to the meeting than registered since both parents came for some students. There were consequent difficulties in supplying enough seating and snacks. The principal and teachers managed the situation and were happy with the huge attendance.

The total students were 250 but 326 parents came, as there were both parents for some students. I was short of chairs. Then we arranged some student benches for parent seating. I could not give snack packets to teachers, as there were extra parents.

It was not a one-off meeting and it continues as part of the school practices. Now the parent meeting in Shanjeebon School is considered a significant event for parents to help their student's learning. Because there was no parent meeting previously, they had little connection with the school. A parent, who is working as the joint convener of the *Ovivabok Forum*, the guardian forum, supported Nazrul's initiatives in engaging parents with the school. The parent knew this school from its establishment but had never before connected with this principal. Bahadur, a parent and joint convener, gave his view of it.

The reason for this school's advancement is the parents' meetings. Since the beginning in 1987, there was no parent meeting in this school until the current principal joined here. I know because my sister was a student here and my family was involved with the establishment of this school.

Dialogue with the principal and parents indicated that Nazrul was successful in getting parents to attend the meeting. Once they were there, participation was required to engage them in student learning and in building active collaboration.

Encouraging parents to talk - responses to the issues raised

Attendance does not ensure participation if parents are not interested in sharing views about their children's learning. Because parents were not used to coming to such a meeting, Nazrul needed to motivate them to speak out in the meeting about their views on learning.

As mentioned in Chapter Six, Nazrul opened the floor for parents to ask questions and make comments. He asked them to talk freely about the school, teachers and their children without any hesitation. He also made them aware that critique did not mean only talking about the negative aspects; they could mention positive aspects as well. He appointed some teachers to write down the points mentioned.

I delegated three people to write down what the parents said: the demands from us, changes they wanted and positive aspects of our school. I asked them that in order to develop your children as a human beings what do you want from us, what changes are needed in our teaching styles, how appropriate are the ways our teachers are teaching in class, do your children receive it properly and if you provide a house tutor is it the same teacher? These answers would help me to understand how much support my teachers are providing in the classroom.

Many parents who were present at the meeting talked about their children for the first time. Although most schools do not like to hear criticism, Nazrul asked parents to give feedback. It made them curious and they wanted to use the opportunity. The parents' meeting gave them a platform to share their stories for better learning. One parent, Atahar, spoke about how he found the meeting.

Because of the parent meeting, we had the opportunity to express our opinion. Our children sometimes share their problems with us such as what they could not understand in classes, where they need help and so on. We can talk about those issues in the parents meetings. Many guardians can share their ideas. I may think one way that might vary from others. We all can talk and share those ideas in the meeting.

The principal and teachers listened to parents for a long time. As well as appointing the teachers to take notes, Nazrul also noted down parents' concerns so that he did not miss any important point. The principal wanted to sort out significant recommendations for his school and how to resolve issues as quickly as possible. He tried to find immediate solutions so he could announce them at the meeting. Nazrul answered their concerns for one hour.

By analysing their comments, I initiated different changes. There was a recommendation in that meeting that students need extra coaching in some courses. They mentioned that children do not get enough classes in science, math and English and need extra support. They also told us about how their children waste time at home. Besides, they mentioned some positive aspects that we do for our school.

According to the principal, that meeting allowed him to develop a link between teachers and parents. There was resistance from some teachers who were criticised by the parents. How Nazrul overcame this resistance is discussed in Chapter Six.

Nazrul assured parents that he would consider their recommendations and that he would be ready to introduce possible solutions within a week. After a week he wrote a letter to the parents.

I informed the parents about my initiatives by writing a letter to them. I mentioned that I have started those changes to honour your recommendations. This is not like it will not change any more. If you feel any change is required you are most welcome to visit and talk to me and my door is open for you.

A parent, Atahar agreed that the school is getting benefits by the principal involving parents.

Since he started the parents meeting in this school, it opened the door and made us encouraged to come to school. When a person is interested to do something, we should extend our hands.

When parents felt encouraged to become engaged with the school and to contribute to their children's learning, this contributed positively to school reform.

Strategies to solve issues by negotiating with parents and teachers

A number of issues were raised in the first parent meeting. It was impossible for the principal to solve all them instantly. Because the principal arranged the meeting to focus on better results in SSC examination, he was interested to take immediate actions that had direct impact on student achievement in public examinations. When parents urged for extra coaching in specific subjects, he started it within one week. He arranged those classes at a time so that students could attend and teachers were free to do extra teaching. So he selected an after-school time for the morning shift and a before-school time for the afternoon shift students.

I arranged three special classes for English first paper, second paper and mathematics. Special classes are conducted after school and before school. Our morning shift finishes at 12.00 pm and special classes for them run from 12.30pm to 2.00pm. Again, the afternoon shift starts at 12.30pm. So their special classes start at 10.30am.

It is worth asking why teachers agreed to put extra effort into the coaching when that limited the time teachers might do other work and would have earned additional income by running private sessions with students. According to the principal, he had to negotiate with teachers and parents to get to a solution. He did not have money in the school funds to pay the teachers extra for the coaching classes. However he thought teachers should not put in extra efforts at the cost of sacrificing their additional income. So he discussed the issue at the parent meeting.

I asked parents that if I arrange special classes for your children, I need my teachers at school for longer than their regular time. They would be required to put extra effort and time and I need to pay them to make it

achievable. If I do not provide financial support they will not do the job from their heart. Do you agree to pay for them? They agreed.

Here the significant question was how much extra money the parents could afford to pay as in most cases their income is very low. If the amount set did not show consideration of their financial situation, it would be a burden for them and the decision would not work for the school. So Nazrul had to consider their situation and make it an affordable amount.

I asked about the amount that would not make pressure on them. They proposed a comfortable and reasonable amount according to their income level. If they send their child to teachers for coaching out of school on three courses, it might cost them 1500-3000 Taka. But they proposed 300 Taka only for three subjects and I agreed.

Nazrul tried to make the fees reasonable so that parents and teachers were both happy. Teachers may be paid 10,000 taka for one hour of private coaching. Nazrul calculated that if he put around 40 students in a coaching class, teachers would earn similar or more with the proposed amount. So the decision would be favourable for both teachers and parents.

I considered the teachers' side as well. Those who were involved in private coaching used to take ten to twelve students in a batch and they earned 5000 Taka to 10,000 Taka. Since I have 240 students in Grade Ten, I divided them into sections where 30-40 students in each. So the teachers can earn more in coaching classes.

This example shows Nazrul's acumen in negotiating with teachers and parents. As a leader, he had to consider both sides (teachers and parents) while prioritising the focus on student learning. In this way the parent meeting in Shanjeebon School has become a forum to develop systems and make decisions that enhance student learning at school and home.

Supporting learning at home

Because the Shanjeebon School is situated in a challenging context in terms of poor literacy and low level of income of parents, the community culture reflects

that; in many cases students do not get the essential support for learning at home. In addition, most parents are not aware of the necessity and value of their support for their children's learning. Nazrul had to strategize how he would motivate fathers and mothers to contribute to their children learning at home.

Why parents should take care of learning at home

Parents began to value the actions taken by the principal after he initiated some changes recommended at the parent meetings. This confidence allowed Nazrul to talk more directly about children's learning at home. Nazrul asked the parents how their children could progress without their co-operation when students spend most time at home.

In 24 hours (a day) your child stays at school for four and a half hours. Your children are under direct supervision of teachers for these limited hours. The rest of the time, which is 19.5 hours, your child stays at home with you. If you do not take proper care in this long time, would it possible for us to make him or her the kind of person you hope for?

That thought-provoking question for parents indicated co-responsibility by school and parents in educating students. It also valued the parental contribution to their children's learning. Many principals and parents consider student learning the sole responsibility of school, but Nazrul's approach encouraged parents to contribute to their children's learning.

Giving some responsibility to fathers

In general, mothers take care of children at home since fathers are busy with their work. Due to culture or lack of time, fathers seldom take care of their children at home. Many fathers do not care about their children's learning at home nor did they help them outside their office hours. So Nazrul asked fathers to go to their children everyday after coming home.

Whatever job you do, tell me how many times did you visit your child's table (a desk to do homework) in the evening in the last month, I asked

the present fathers. Did you ask your child what they are learning? You are just relaxing, depending on school. 90% fathers told that they did not visit their child's table at all in the last month. In that situation, I requested them to go to their child's table whenever they go back to home. And to ask them about their learning whether they needed help or not. If you do this, they will be alert in their learning. Sometimes they take advantage of mothers in ways that they cannot take with you. I will meet you again after one month and would like to hear how many times you went to visit your child's table.

To know about the outcome, he arranged a parent meeting after one month and received very positive results. Fathers reported what they did and teachers stated students' recent classroom outcomes. Nazrul was pleased with this result.

I called the parents' meeting just after one month and I got excellent reports from them. Fathers went to children's tables and teachers reported that students' learning was progressive. The active involvement of fathers at children's tables made a positive change in student learning.

It was clear that the principal was able to engage fathers with their children's learning. But Nazrul also recognised the challenge of engaging mothers, who are largely illiterate, with their children's learning since students spend most of their time with them.

Turning mothers into teachers

Given that fathers were usually busy with their work and spent little time at home, Nazrul wanted to involve mothers in their children's learning. So he asked mothers at another meeting how they help their children to learn at home. He got negative answers from most mothers since they were not literate and did not understand the curriculum content.

I asked mothers, "You respond to your child's demands such as food preparation, permission to go somewhere but why do you not look at your child's learning?" I did it initially for mothers of Grade Ten and Eight students. 99% of them responded, saying "How could I look after their learning since I am not educated. I do not understand English or Mathematics. So I do not ask her or him anything about learning".

What could be the solution for these mothers? Nazrul knew that it was impossible to make them literate but he could make them teachers. This role would help them in checking their children's assignment books to enhance the system of monitoring children's daily work at school. The principal explained his education process.

I told them that I would make them teachers like us for their children. They were laughing and asked how to be a teacher. There was a white board beside me. I put a tick mark in black and a cross mark in red on the board and asked them what did that mean. They replied that the tick sign means it is correct and the cross means that it is wrong. I said, from today you will check your child's tasks and look for these signs. If you see tick signs it means your child has learnt the assigned tasks, otherwise they have not. If you see cross marks, tell your child that you could not solve the problem. Would your child not understand that you are educated? So you are the best teacher for your child from today. They agreed with me and told that they can do this.

The way Nazrul made the mothers engage with their students' learning was surprising to me. The process made mothers more aware of their children's progress and contended them to their learning. As Nazrul noted the outcomes of their engagement led to increased achievement in public examination results showed in Appendix-1.

Surprisingly all the mothers act as teachers in my school since then. She might not be able to write her self-name in either Bangla or English but she can check her child's assignments. The improvements in public examination results have been possible because of their involvement.

Here it is worth mentioning again that Nazrul extended support of student learning by sending his teachers to visit students' houses, as discussed in Chapter Six. The teacher visits work in two different ways: monitoring and mentoring student learning at home and being updated about how parents care for their children. Nazrul has engaged parents and teachers in supporting children's learning at home through these inventive initiatives. When fathers and mothers take on some responsibility for their children's learning, a collaborative accountability of school and parents is seen as being productive in preparing

students for society. This has enabled the principal, teachers and parents to take further initiatives that would support and develop the school and community.

Ovivabok Forum: A joint initiative

When I spent time at Nazrul's office for data collection, I often met a man who came and discussed various issues with the principal. At first I was introduced to him as a researcher and a friend of Nazrul, then he introduced himself as a guardian in this school and as a local leader in the region. He spent quite some time, most days an hour or more, at school. I wondered why, so later I asked Nazrul about him and learned that he was the joint convener of the *Ovivabok Forum*, a guardian forum. According to Nazrul he often came to school to share messages from the parents. How the forum stood beside the principal during his critical time is discussed in Chapter Five. The way it was established and how the school and guardian forum worked collaboratively are discussed more fully here.

A platform for parents and community to voice their concerns

To hear parents' concerns in a regular and systematic way, it was necessary to develop a platform because the parents meeting only occurred a limited number of times in a year, perhaps two or three times. When some parents realised there are particular and complex issues in running school they became motivated to develop a platform too. In accord with the interests of parents, Nazrul guided them to initiate a guardian forum for the greater benefit of the school.

Through the forum, the principal thought that he would gain useful information from parents. Not all the parents are confident enough to convey their message to the principal or teachers and in a large forum they may not get an opportunity to say what they wanted to say. Sometimes they wonder whether their talking would be right or wrong. If a team of advocates work for them, those parents would feel free to share their views. So he asked some interested parents to develop a platform so that they can work as a team for parents. Bahadur, joint convener, spoke about this initiative.

The principal suggested to us that a team is required for any work. You can make a team among guardians, he said, and you may guide parents for school development. I believe they will follow your words. After developing the forum, we both (school and parents) benefited because we are working in a team and the team is discussing issues with the principal. He discussed any issues raised with his teachers.

Parents thought they needed group identity to discuss issues more easily with the principal and SMC. The guardian forum would create opportunities for parents to talk to them at anytime as Bahadur explained.

If I want to talk to the school, I need an identity. We all are students' guardians. So a platform was required where parents can share their message and then it would be conveyed to the authority. Because of the forum we are able to talk about our rights strongly. The principal then tries to solve the issues with a discussion with teachers. It also works as a support for the principal.

The forum opened the door to convey parent messages to community members rather than to the principal. Because forum leaders were their community fellows they could easily share their message through them. Bahadur mentioned how he listened to the parents and conveyed messages to the school.

Everyday I spend one or two hours at school. At first I spend some times at the entrance gate and talk to parents, especially with mothers. I convey their message to the principal when they are complaining. Many of them feel uncomfortable and shy to talk to the principal in a direct way. Even some of them do not know how to discuss an issue. But they can easily share with me as a community member. So we help to convey their message to school authority and we established the guardian forum for this reason.

Thus the guardian forum works for the community and the principal, taking responsibility to solve issues for the parents who do not want to share their problems directly with Nazrul.

Supporting the school and community

The guardian forum operates as an observer for the community. The leaders and active members try to find out the people who need help. Some parents do not have the financial ability to pay tuition fees and hesitate to discuss their problems with the principal. If parents have sudden financial problems, they would not want to share them with the principal and teachers. As a result, their children often stop schooling. In such cases, the forum works to support the school and community by identifying those children. Every active member of the guardian forum keeps a watchful eye on who needs help. Bahadur discussed how the forum works.

We have begun the forum for the benefits of this school. There are some families in this area who do not have the ability to bear the cost of education. We discuss and support them. We try to solve their problems. We sit together for discussion at school and sometime out of school.

The guardian forum takes an active role motivating parents to send their children to school. The forum members visit parents who are not sending their children to school. As community members they knew those parents and their needs. So they try to encourage the parents' hopes by providing support. The forum believes that without educating all children their society cannot prepare for a bright future. So they arrange financial help for them; in most cases a tuition fee waiver. They discuss their issues with Nazrul and assure parents that they can send their children to school without fear about where the support will come from. Bahadur explained how it works.

Some parents feared that they did not have enough money to send their child to school. We told them, "Do not worry about that. We had a discussion with the principal and he had requested to send your child to school. We do not expect that our children will not be educated because of financial crisis". When we make them hopeful or get assurance from school for continuing education, they are interested in learning. This is good that our children become educated and collectively our society is developed.

Besides providing community support, the guardian forum protects the school from other problems. One example is 'Eve teasing' (a common term for assault of girls in Bangladesh), which is a significant problem for girl students attending school. It is difficult for a guardian, alone, to talk to those involved in Eve teasing. As Bahadur stated, if a guardian protested, he or she was often asked, "Why should we bother with you?". After establishing the guardian forum, they cannot talk this way. No guardian is alone anymore. They are a collective entity as Bahadur explained.

We work as a team. As a result any problem is our problem, our children's problem, our society's problem. Those who talk in that rough way; we find out about them. Then we call their guardians to school to discuss the issue. Then they discuss it with their child and do control them. Or those who are familiar to us, we do a talk with them to solve the issue.

This demonstrates the collectiveness of parents where the individual problems have turned into community problems. Without doubt, Nazrul's success in enables parents to consider any of the school's problems also problems of school and community. This realisation allowed the principal to remove further barriers standing in the way of him improving his school.

School-parents-community support

Nazrul does not work only as the head of the school; he plays a role as a leader to resolve family and community issues. Because a school is a social institution and works as a mirror for society, it cannot be developed without a proper communication with its community. There were issues in the surrounding community of Shanjeebon School Nazrul could not avoid if he wanted to educate students to be good citizens who will lead their community in the near future.

Resolving family issues

There are direct social impact of family environments on student development and learning. Nazrul shared that sometimes he could track what was happening

in the lives of individual students and take initiatives to resolve their problems. For example, he was concerned about one student whose roll number (rank) dropped down significantly. First he talked to the student to find out what affected his study.

One of our students, who stood third position in the first term examination, dropped down to nineteenth. It was quite abnormal to me. When I was signing his result card I pointed that out. I called his class teacher to my room and he let me know that the student was irregular in school for a certain period and was not attentive in class. Then I talked to the student and asked him to tell me why he was dropping down.

As the outcome of a quarrel, the student's father and mother began to live separately and he had to stay with his father. That was the first time he had lived without his mother. Separation is not an expected practice in Bangladeshi culture. He could not share such a bad story with his principal. But when Nazrul assured him that it would not impact on their family life and he was only trying to secure his student life, he then started to tell the story. According to Nazrul, "The student stayed with his father since the separation. The father spent most time out of the home and a deep realisation of his mother's absence made him mentally feel down".

As a personal issue, talking about the relationship between husband and wife is sensitive and Nazrul had to be very careful and strategic to solve this problem. After deep thinking, Nazrul decided to talk to the student's father first. He knew that every father has a soft side concerning his child's future. So he showed him the result cards for last two examinations for his son and how that had varied. He asked for reasons without revealing that he knew the facts.

I called his father first. I showed him the result card for his son. I asked him a question, "For whom are you doing work and earning money?" He answered that for his children. I again asked, "Have you seen your child's result?" He replied that he could not understand. I asked him, "Do you want that your son would be a good person?" He just kept him silent.

It seems the father did not want to share his family problem. But Nazrul was adamant that he would solve the problem so he was indicated some reasons that could be the cause. After a long discussion the father did speak.

After a long discussion he was open to me and shared that there is a problem in his family life. I asked him, "Could you solve the problem for the betterment of your child?" He replied, "I don't do anything wrong, it comes from her (his wife) side". I said okay and asked him, "Will you come again if I call?" He said, "Yes of course, if you call me".

Nazrul thought he should talk with the mother to know the real story. The next day Nazrul called the mother to talk and heard the story from her viewpoint. The mother blamed her husband in a similar way. Then the principal arranged a face-to-face meeting with both of them.

Next day I called the mother through cell phone to come to school. After talking in a similar way I asked her, "Are you happy when you are staying out of your family?" She could not talk and also could not control her dropping tears. So I asked, "What should you do then? Can you solve the problem for your child's betterment?" She replied, "I want to solve it but his father does not hear me". I told that if you do not mind I want to arrange a face-to-face talk for both of you. She agreed after a while.

Nazrul arranged the meeting and provided an opportunity for them to talk face-to-face in his room. Though their two children were present, he kept them waiting out of his room until the parents were ready to reach a solution. He was successful in solving the problem and sent the family together back home.

They talked to each other in front of me inside my room and kept their children waiting outside. They made claims against each other. At last, I brought the children in front of them and requested to talk looking at their face. One was crying by holding the son and other was crying by holding the daughter. And they went back home together from my office. The boy will sit for SSC examination this year and his role number is in between one to five now.

Though he mentioned this example of how a family problem could impact on a student's learning, he agreed that it is not possible to track every student.

Because there are more than 3000 students in his school, he only can understand the vulnerability of better-positioned students in each grade. Although this is a confidential story, the principal has set an example to understand that family issues have a direct impact on student learning. Nazrul's negotiation with the parents not only solved the wellbeing of the student, it also resolved a crucial issue in husband-wife relationship that could have turned into a permanent separation. Thus, Nazrul showed a way to redevelop relationships that potentially drive the community in a positive direction.

Aware of community issues and student learning

Nazrul works on community issues as well. He thinks that there is lack of trust in society at present. Society has changed with time. Previously, husbands used to earn the income and wives took care of family members. With time, maintaining a family on a single income has become difficult and mothers started to search for job opportunities. The garment factories opened the door for mothers to easily get a job in the school region. Nowadays both parents hold jobs in many families. Although it has extended their income, it has also created some complexities in family life and in the community as Nazrul has noticed.

Some problems have been raised in society. Due to their jobs, mothers cannot give sufficient time to the family. So husbands complain about that. Another complaint from wives is that husbands are not as responsible as they were. They do not take care of families in the ways they need. Some mothers tell that their husband do not support them financially since they get an income. So they need to bear their family expenditure. In addition, some men stop working when their wives work. It is clear that there is lack of trust in their relationships.

Nazrul believes that there is an impact on student learning from the lack of trust between their parents. Due to less trust, parents often quarrel, which ruins the environment for learning at home. Because most families live in one-bedroom houses, the parents or children cannot avoid the squabble situation. The children tend to lose mental peace, which takes them away from learning. Nazrul described the situation.

There is an impact on student learning when there is a weak relationship. When the child sits to do homework, the parents might start to quarrel. So the child cannot do her or his tasks. Since the child cannot avoid parents' quarrel due to lack of space in the house, they hear and learn unexpected issues from the parents. The child feels irritated and makes comments, which goes in support of either side. So mother or father becomes unhappy with their child. In the end, the child is shunned either by the mother or the father. It directly impacts on their learning because she or he cannot come to school with a mental peace that they supposed to have.

Besides the quarrelling there are other factors that impact on student learning at home. Because parents are busy with their jobs for the whole day, they need some recreation at home. Because of availability and low cost, Sky channels are a popular recreations for parents when they return home. Also, some parents like to sleep since they are tired after work so turn out the lights. Students sometimes need to give up their bed for their relatives. Nazrul gave some insight into such home life.

In a one-bedroom house a child cannot learn if the parents want to watch television or turn the light off for sleep. In a two-bedroom house, if relatives such as grandparents or uncles come and stay for a week, they normally share the room with the student. Often the student sacrifices her or his bed and sleeps on floor. So it causes disruptions to learning.

Nazrul learnt about those situations when he sent his teachers to students' homes to view their learning environment and progress, as discussed in Chapter Six. He knew that he could not change the social reality in which the parents and students are living but he would find a way to solve the problems with help from teachers and parents. He arranged the coaching classes so that students could complete most of their learning at school at a very low cost. This action shows Nazrul's skill in overcoming problems.

Helping community to see the school as an important organisation

Through these positive approaches, Nazrul has improved communication between the school and the community. His initiatives of getting parents into the

school, keeping them informed and including them as part of school decision-making processes, affirms for parents what Nazrul's goals for school reform are and that has made his job easier.

A bonding with parents has developed and this trust has increased my duty to develop the school. Parents got faith that the school is trying to develop their children. Because of this change, my initial journey became easier. Accordingly, when I respected their views they started to believe that the school recognised them. As a result the number of students has increased from 1500 to 3500.

The ability to build trusting relationships and being responsive to family and community issues that impact student learning has determined a position for Nazrul where parents and community people see him a benefactor for the school and community. Nazrul mentioned a simple example of how his work motivated parents to develop trust with the school.

For social trust there is goodwill for our school in the community. They think that school does not work only for students; it also works for them. The tuition fee is not much. If any application come such as a father has died, I mark the sentence underlined and make the candidate tuition fee free for the whole year. This is a habit for me. For this reason a trust has been developed among parents.

Zakir, a SMC member, supports the principal's actions. A number of students get free education every year. The scholarships offered depend on the family situation of respective students.

Because guardian forum members know the situations well, they advocate with Nazrul on behalf of the students. It helps him make these decisions. Bahadur explained how they offer scholarships to students.

Every year the school offers free education to 100-150 students. Though there are government subsidies for tuition fees, the institution is going beyond that. For example the school make 50%-100% concession on tuition fees based on situations. Some students pay only examination fees. We know the community people and observe their

situation that they do not have the ability. Since we know, we should do something for them.

Along with such assistance for current students, the principal provided a significant example in re-educating the ex-students of Shanjeebon School who were named as *mastan*, discussed in detail in Chapter Five. When those ex-students became connected with the school and positive about social wellbeing, the community people also regarded the principal as a leader for community development. Nazrul has engaged his students in community services for experiential learning such as the cleanliness project, tree plantation, relief work that have profiled him as a principal who is focused on student learning and community development. These projects were discussed fully in Chapter Seven. As a whole, Shanjeebon School has become an important organisation for the community to educate their children. Now Nazrul is pleased that the parents and community people work as ambassadors for the school.

They (community people) are not only well-wishers, but also people who work as ambassadors for the school. We do not need a marketing person in our school. Parents circulate our good work in society. They are bonded with the school.

This indicates how Nazrul has developed connections between school and community. When many schools are challenged in developing good relationships with the broader community while working as a sole organisation, Nazrul has set an example of how to build relationships and how to help parents consider school as an important organisation for the community.

A two-way process of support

The initiatives taken by Nazrul have contributed to develop a learner-friendly environment for teacher and students in Shanjeebon School. Teachers and parents I talked to agreed that teaching and learning have been changed due to parental involvement. Bahadur believes the leadership and administration of the current principal is a significant reason for the changes. Visible progress in the

community is evident in terms of the literacy rate and awareness of community issues.

Changes in the culture of teaching and learning

According to Zakir, teachers in Shanjeebon School were accustomed to teaching using more traditional methods. They went to the classroom and taught through a teacher-centric transmission of knowledge. They seldom asked students whether they understood the content or not, nor did they get students to help each other understand through pairs or group activities. Teachers gave students home tasks in their courses. Many students' parents are illiterate and cannot help them to do the assigned home tasks. Students faced punishment for not doing their home tasks as Zakir, a SMC member, discussed.

Previously teachers went to classrooms and taught content in their own way. May be she or he instructed students to get ready for a specific content at home. If we think about mathematics classes, teacher entered into classroom and asked about the home tasks. Those who had done their assignments were good, but others faced punishment. Most of teachers did not think about the reasons behind it. Even they did not teach it in the way that students could understand.

This culture of teaching started changing when Nazrul motivated parents to talk about their children. In parent meetings, parents requested teachers to teach in a way so that students can understand the content. They also asked them to call on students to solve a similar problem or task at the blackboard so others could see how it was done. If any student was unable to solve a home task, teachers could be invited to ask the student about the reasons for not doing the assignments. These discussions helped teachers to think about their quality and style of teaching.

Teachers agreed that the parent meeting helps them understand their teaching. They tried to understand the important points from parents who talked at the meeting. They noted down changes required in their teaching and what would be helpful for student learning. Sometimes parents mentioned points that teachers

and the principal could never know. Some points might be against a specific teacher but they did not mind since dealing with that could improve learning. Suva, a teacher, noted the benefits of meetings with parents.

The benefits of parent meetings are that we can understand students' learning (needs) through parents. If parents find any problem at home, they can talk to us. Besides, some parents who are aware, educated and well-wishers suggest good things to the school. We write down their concerns and then we try to address them.

Because of the communication and collaboration between teachers and parents, the teaching and learning has been enriched in Shanjeebon School. Whereas previously teachers and parents were on different sides of a fence, Nazrul's initiatives have encouraged them to support each other for the betterment of children's learning.

Developing systems that contribute to learning improvement

A strong relationship with parents and community has enabled Nazrul to introduce systems in his school that potentially contribute to making students and parents more aware of learning. Children who used to take advantage of their parents cannot do so anymore. When there was less communication with parents, students could leave home in their school uniform and roam around with their friends. Parents could not track them. The school authority could not inform the parents due to lack of communication networks. Now Nazrul has developed a system where the school has personal information of all students, maintain records of regular attendance and parents are required to come to school if a student is absent.

If students are absent, teachers or student leaders contact their parents. Then parents are required to come to school with a leave application. Through this system parents are informed that their children missed school. The system puts students under pressure if they truant. As a result, student attendance is better at present and there is an impact on their learning. Atahar likes the new system.

If my son is absent for any reason, I have to come to school. Otherwise he is not allowed in classes. So parents are bound to visit school. Parents are then alerted that her or his child did not go to school. As a result, students do not get the courage to avoid school. If students do not avoid school, of course their learning will be better.

The school takes extra care of the attendance of students who are going to sit the public examinations because this is very important. Bahadur noted what happens.

If anyone who will sit for public examinations such as SSC is absent in any class, the class teacher contacts her or his parents. The teacher tries to find out reasons why the student is not coming to school such as sickness, lack of interest. The school needs to know as the student will register and sit for public examination. If she or he sits for examination without proper preparation, we would not be able to achieve our 100% pass rate. Teachers and the school are doing this so that school improvement is continued.

Nazrul agreed with the joint convener and mentioned how school achievement has increased in recent years. He believes this increase is due to parent involvement.

Before my joining the number of students who sat for SSC examination was not more than 100. Now around 300 students sit for SSC examination. The success rate was less than 80%, which is 100% at present. This achievement comes from the parental involvement. For student learning their involvement has impacted significantly.

Although Nazrul is happy with the improvement of student learning at his school, a process of engaging students with community remains a challenge. Because Nazrul's goal is to educate students as good citizens who are able to achieve academically as well as gain social-cultural values and be ready to take on responsibilities for their community, he understands the importance of extra-curricular activities. However, he faced with resistance from parents. The principal has found strategies to overcome resistance so parents do allow their children to participate in such activities.

Strategies to engage students with community

Because parents did not know much about learning and education, they resisted their children engaging in extra-curricular activities. Nazrul was concerned that students could not develop fully without giving them opportunities for community services and experiential learning. So he began to involve students in projects where they would learn a wider range of things. But it was difficult for him to convince parents at the first time. Nazrul requested parents to trial it for one term.

Resistance came from parents when I involved students in different projects. They believed that the projects wasted learning time and it could hamper their children's examination results. I called them and told them it will help to improve their results as they will do some work together with friends. So you need to wait and support me. If you see your child achieve worse result than present in coming examination then you are right. But if they do better, then you will not consider it as bad practice I believe. I had to convince them in such ways.

Nazrul had to be strategic to overcome resistance. Initially, he engaged some teachers to take special care of those students who were involved in the initial projects. The extra care allowed students to achieve better grades in the next examination. Nazrul described his strategy.

I called their parents and showed them the results. I asked them do you still think that the project is bad for your child? They replied 'no sir' and 'you could go forward'. I had to develop the plan to engage students. After a certain time, parents or students do not say 'no' to any project when I ask them. Because they know that it is good for them.

When parents permitted extra-curricular activities, Nazrul got students to participate in several projects. At present there are clubs for students such as debating club, Girl Guides and Rotary club. The school celebrates some international and national days. Student involvement in the community is discussed fully in Chapter Seven. Parents could see how their children became involved with the community, learning to work for people and developing

wisdom in standing beside them during a critical time. The tree plantation contributes to make the environment green and the cleanliness helps to keep community people's health well, cultural programmes enrich students by their learning about their traditions of history and culture.

Bahadur agreed that the extra-curricular activities are broadening learning for their children and developing students' critical thinking and personal characteristics and values. Now he thinks that the extra-curricular activities attract parents and children to apply for admission into Shanjeebon School.

I think the co-curricular programmes enhance students' talents. To make them more intelligent and to develop their human characteristics, these are good initiatives. One of my grand-daughters was interested to get admission in this school because of the cultural programmes. There is a dance teacher in this school, so she asked her mother to admit herself here.

Nazrul has nurtured an environment of reform for the school and community to support each other. Using creative ideas and effective strategies he has been able to motivate the parents and community to engage with their children's learning and for students to contribute to community.

Aligning Nazrul's practices with context and literature

Narratives in this chapter provide examples of effective leadership initiatives in engaging parents and community with student learning at school and home. They show how such engagement is benefitting the student learning and community. Nazrul has engaged parents and community. How he has overcome the challenges that emerged and his success are summarised in the model below.

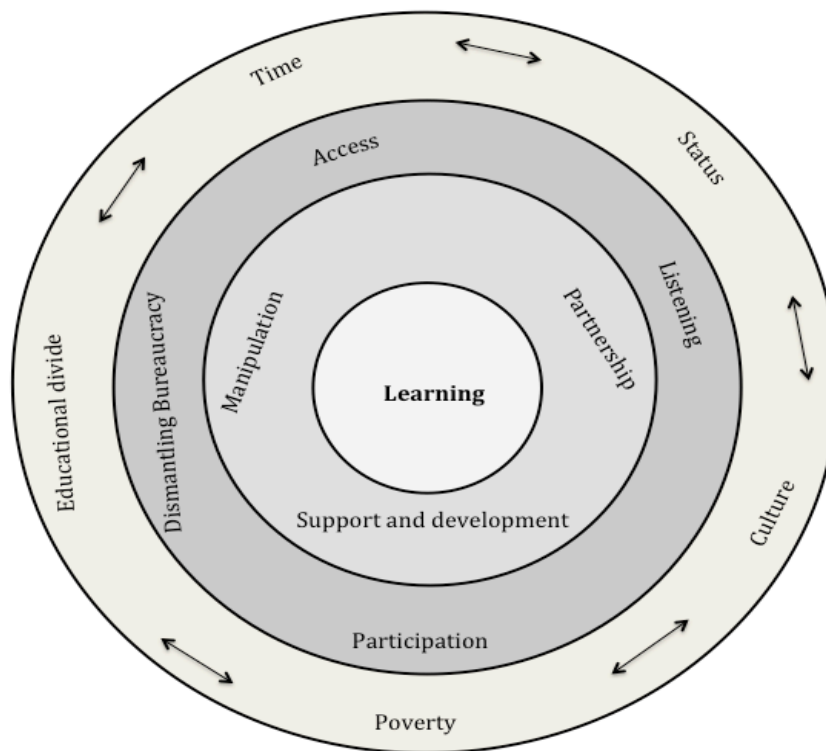


Figure 9: Nazrul's practices for engaging parents and community with school

As shown in the framework, the school is situated in a community where poverty and educational differences classify people into certain levels of status. In this community, Nazrul has engaged parents and the wider community in student learning using a number of strategies: manipulating traditional administrative and managerial policies; providing scope and creating platforms to connect parents to the school; and engaging parents and teachers with children's learning at home. The process of motivating and enabling parents, students and teachers to improve learning has had focus on enhancing student achievement and contributing to community development.

Leadership in engaging parents and community is characterised by Nazrul's initiatives to create opportunities to build relationships between the school and parents. By keeping his door open for anyone to visit, the principal has reduced the usual bureaucratic processes and power barriers. By considering the reality for parents to manage time for meeting him and making himself available, Nazrul

meets many more parents. This action shows sincerity, responsibility and the desire of the principal to develop learning through parental engagement. Barr and Saltmarsh (2014), in a study in Australia, argued that the principal has an important role in establishing relationships between the school and parents. Whereas OECD (2008) found that involving disadvantaged parents in school activities is least likely to happen, Nazrul manifested their engagement effectively in his school.

Schools are considered as organisations providing education that reflects the community and broader society. Benefits of developing partnerships between school and community have been stressed by a number of researchers as a means to promote educational outcomes (Epstein & Sanders, 1998; Hands, 2010; Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007; Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Nazrul demonstrates innovative ideas and strategies to foster and maintain positive relationships with parents and community. This idea resonates with results in studies conducted by Barr and Saltmarsh (2014) and Leithwood et al., (2010) where the principal's role is clearly a crucial factor in developing and maintaining relationships between the school and parents.

A defining strategy used by Nazrul to build community relationships is valuing local customs in making parents comfortable to meet him and teachers. A significant example in this case was how Nazrul provides easier access for parents to visit him in their ordinary clothes, making them feel welcome. Barr and Saltmarsh (2014) stressed that parents feel entitled or intimidated to enter the school gates depending on the principal's attitude to parents. Nazrul's attitude is to warmly welcome parents to develop effective positive relationships that have the potential to turn into partnership. This stance made him a role model for his teachers so they also could use more effective communication with parents (discussed in Chapter Six). Landeros (2011) found the parent-teacher partnership is one of the most important factors for improving children's learning and life skills.

By connecting better with parents and in getting feedback from parents in a systematic way, Nazrul has extended his influence from an individual to a collaborative process. At the initial stage, the parent meeting allowed him to introduce himself and his goals and objectives for the school. A significant example was how he convinced parents about stopping students, who failed in the internal school test examination, from sitting the public examination. The meeting became a place of sharing and exchanging views across parents and teachers and allowed them to learn from each other. Nazrul's work in successfully coordinating expectations through the parent meeting resonates with Johnson and Jervis-Tracey (2011) who stressed that both teachers and parents can learn each other's expectations for children's learning. Despite the resistance from teachers after listening to parents' criticism of teaching (discussed in Chapter Six), Nazrul seeded a way of collaboration between teachers and parents that fosters student learning.

Nazrul engages parents and teachers with children's learning at home. Bottrell and Goodwin (2011b) considered parents as first educators for children and Jeynes (2005) found that they are the crucial factor for productive student outcomes. Nazrul highlighted that parents spend much more time with students than do teachers. His strategy of sending fathers to talk with their children during study at home led to more successful achievement. Whether fathers were able to mentor their children or not, their monitoring of what they are learning contributes to making students aware of the importance of completing their assigned work at home. The simple way of enabling mothers to check their children's assignment book engages illiterate mothers with learning. The engagement between mother and child is enriched by other initiatives undertaken by Nazrul such as the mother's day programme (discussed in Chapter Seven). By introducing home visits by teachers Nazrul supports student learning at home with collaborative accountability of parent-teacher for student learning (discussed in Chapter Six). Epstein and Salinas (2004) argued that parent-teacher partnership has the potential to improve student achievement

and success. Initiatives taken by Nazrul showed the impact of such partnership in examination achievement and in community development.

Nazrul's initiatives have resulted in improved teaching and learning in Shanjeebon School. The principal, teachers and parents report that teaching and learning has been changed in a positive way since parents now have involvement with their children's learning at school and at home. Now that the principal and teachers carefully listen to parent concerns about their children's learning and take respective actions, parents take into account the suggestions they get from the school. Such respect in valuing each other has allowed Nazrul to develop an effective learning community where the school, parents and community work together. Bryan and Henry (2012) and Epstein and Van Voorhis (2010) argued that when the school, family and community put their effort together in student learning, the achievement gap decreases significantly. The improved results in public examination such as 100% pass rate and active engagement in classes and in community work illustrates Nazrul's success in developing the students.

Narratives in this chapter and preceding chapters show the focus on community development as well as student learning. Nazrul's broad thinking on student learning and concern for family and community issues colour his leadership of both the school and the community. He sought reasons why some students' results dropped and found ways to solve the causes of problems creatively. Although he is aware of his limited power, in terms of student numbers, to solve family or social issues, he does so whenever he becomes aware of problems. He cannot resolve the accommodation difficulties that impact on student learning for the majority of families attending his school, but the example of regaining trust between a husband and wife signifies his commitment to keep family bonding firm in the community. Another powerful story of his dedication to community is his initiatives for the ex-students to unlearn their bad habits, then relearn values and engage with school (discussed in Chapter Five). While Ahmad (2007) claimed that secondary schools in Bangladesh often reinforce social disparities because of the funding system and the need for private expenditure

by students, Nazrul has proved how his school is increasing social equity in the community.

His broader focus on student learning through community involvement such as service and experiential learning has extended his leadership. But parent resistance to their children participating in extra-curricular activities was an initial challenge. The principal justified the time spent on extra-curricular activities with a promise of improved examination results. It seems that the parents became convinced after getting their children involved more in learning and community though they were initially reluctant about why the extra-curricular activities were important. Those community services benefit both the students and community development. In this way a partnership between the school and community has been developed.

Nazrul is proactive in developing collaboration between school and parents. Since parents were unaware of their roles or how they could contribute in school and because of the economical demands for them to have jobs, they had little flexibility to travel to school. So the principal created opportunities to ensure their presence and to get their voices heard at the parent meeting. His account of listening to parents carefully and providing solutions assured parents about his commitment to developing student learning. Arranging special coaching for Grade Ten students is an example of an initiative that allowed the principal to show his prompt action in achieving successful outcomes in upcoming SSC examinations. Raffaele and Knoff (1999) claimed the value of developing collaboration in a proactive way rather than reactive and suggest listening to parents' concerns and taking consequent actions. Through Nazrul's actions, whenever parents and teachers spoke up, they increased understanding and that developed a trusting relationship. During a critical time the parents realised the need for a guardian forum that could act as an advisory group for the principal and that saved him from his position being terminated (explained fully in Chapter Five). This action shows reciprocity of the relationship between the principal and the parents.

Platforms such as the guardian forum and parents meetings help to continue and sustain partnerships between the school and parents that has led to improved student learning. The guardian forum acts as a watch-dog for the community. This forum resonates with the idea of shifting the role of collaboration among parent-community-school from a narrow view of student achievement to advocacy for educational justice (Bottrell & Goodwin, 2011b; Martinez-Cosio, 2010). By talking to the principal and teachers, the forum leaders offer suggestions for changes within the school by finding what families require assistance and offering necessary help. These actions ensure a more considered approach to meet the needs of the children and the communities.

The collaborative work of the principal and the guardian forum has overcome the perception that poverty is an excuse for student absenteeism from school and for poor outcomes in examinations. This resonates with the findings of Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) in their study of the secret of Tower Hamlet's success for a Bangladesh community in the United Kingdom, where the council was battling to improve student achievement whilst simultaneously strengthening community engagement with schools. Nazrul demonstrates how a principal can enable a school and its surrounding community to overcome challenges within the constraints experienced by unprivileged people.

Narratives in this chapter have demonstrated an active partnership between the Shanjeebon School and its surrounding community. Bottrell and Goodwin (2011a) stressed that school is increasingly becoming separate from the local community and school cannot do the big job of student development by itself, but Nazrul has set examples of developing the school with the support of community and eventually building an education conscious community. His initiatives in building partnerships among school-parents-community have successfully contributed to improving student learning and community development. The partnership has worked as a two-way process where students gain experiential learning from the community and the community benefits

through services. The specific strategies that Nazrul has used to perform such leadership are summarised in the model below.

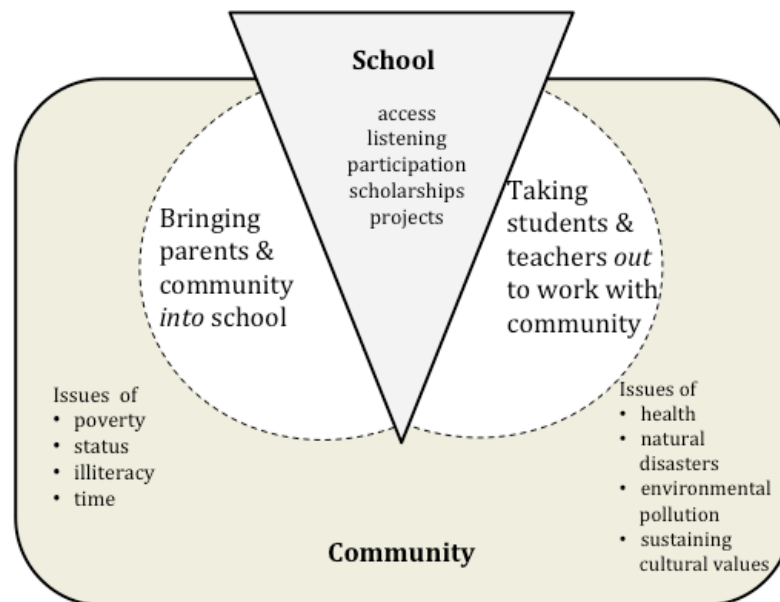


Figure 10: Principal leadership for school-parents-community partnership

The first aspect is the focus on building relationships with parents and community, and bringing them into the school. Consideration of parents' education, time, economy and culture have led to effective ways to invite parents to come and visit the principal and teachers. Valuing parents and community people's views and taking immediate actions have prompted a trust relationship between the school and parents. They could see that Nazrul follows through with actions. Along with individual communication, the platforms of parents meeting and the guardian forum provide opportunities for the school and community to exchange views and support each other.

The second aspect is aligned with engaging students and teachers with community work. In developing active collaboration between school and community the principal considered community issues such as health, environmental pollution and cultural values and successfully motivated his teachers and students to contribute to overcoming some of the causes of the problems. Providing necessary support for learning at home extended this collaboration with parents.

The third aspect is school development as being important for the community. It evolves from the outcomes of collaboration between first and second aspects. The student engagement in community activities promotes experiential learning for the students and contributes to community wellbeing. Because the principal and teachers work for the community and value the community members, both the students and the community benefit. Students grew academically and gained life skills from their experiences. Parents became more aware of the importance of education and how it could impact on reducing the impact of their illiteracy through taking care of their children's learning. Finally, the school and community both benefit from this style of leadership.

Closing comments

Narratives in this chapter have reported a range of strategies used by the principal to enable and engage in partnership between school-parents-community. Nazrul's personal skills and the strategies he employed to improve student learning and support community progression have been identified and discussed. Despite increasing gaps between school and community reported in some international literature (Blankstein & Noguera, 2015; Bottrell & Goodwin, 2011a), this chapter shows examples and models of how a creative principal motivates and involves parents in a challenging community to reform a school and to redirect the community to be aware of education. How these strategies may be utilised to determine future policy direction and to develop leadership programmes is yet to be explored. Meanwhile Nazrul's dream to develop good

citizens who have the necessary life skills to contribute to society is aligned with better results in examinations

Chapter Nine

Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter explains how a detailed and contextually grounded exemplar of resourceful and effective leadership provides a much-needed contribution to research about education in Bangladesh. It then draws together the threads of strategies Nazrul used to reshape and reform his school to improve learning. The chapter then reviews how Nazrul's practice unlocks the blockages of problems repeatedly identified in other research about education in Bangladesh. Finally it makes a number of recommendations for policy, practice and further research.

The significance of this research

This study took place because of the paucity of research into the actual practice of principals in Bangladesh, and particularly the need for exemplars of practice that improve opportunities for learning. As explained in earlier chapters, Bangladesh has implemented a number of projects for the professional development of teachers but there has not yet been a substantive programme to train school leaders. Research, such as this study, that examines contextualised aspirations and actions in leadership both highlights the need for programmes that may be used to educate other principals and provides understandings that can be used to shape such programmes.

Principals are widely considered to be the linchpins in schools (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990; Parsons & Beauchamps, 2011). This case study of Nazrul's practice, as well as the international literature, show that if a leader is capable and wins the trust of others, she or he can empower teachers to develop and utilise their capabilities, engage parents and other community members to take interest in and support student learning and create structures and procedures within the school that will allow students to be more active in their own learning and support the learning of others. The position of the principal is one of power,

especially within the relatively hierarchical systems of Bangladesh schools. Such power can be used as a means of controlling behaviour and in worst cases preventing initiatives by others. It can also be used to empower others, as Nazrul's account has shown. The term 'heroic leadership' in the literature (Manz & Sims, 1991; Murphy, 1988) is often associated with criticism of an overtly ego-centric style, and conveys a sense that the leader is infringing on the agency of teachers and other stakeholders in the school. However, as the challenges to Nazrul's initiatives illustrate, a strong degree of both courage and self-determination was needed to create the changes in Shanjeebon School. Rather than disempowering teachers, what might be called Nazrul's heroic leadership has created a safe zone for teachers where they could be empowered. Perhaps it is such models of heroic leadership that are needed in Bangladesh as well as in other developing countries.

Principals, by the very nature of the position, play a key role in the school. They have the power to make others effective in their various roles. In this case study of Nazrul's leadership, a range of practices was explored to answer the main research question "How does a principal in a Bangladeshi secondary school create the changes needed to improve student learning, develop teacher agency, and contribute to community well-being?" The outcomes of this research show promising possibilities for improving the teaching and learning, community development, teacher empowerment, student engagement and school-parents partnership in other schools.

The qualities that allow principals to lead

This study has identified personal characteristics and qualities demonstrated by Nazrul that give him the capacity and capability to facilitate change, and to develop a school culture around multifaceted student learning.

The characteristics that have ensured success for this principal include his breadth of knowledge and sharp intelligence, multifaceted training, timely

responses, smart, management skills, strategic thinking, effective communication and relationship building. These are matched by his personal qualities; he is committed, honest, courageous, creative and imaginative, considerate and caring, friendly and open-minded, sincere, thoughtful and self-reflective, enterprising and resourceful, purposeful and persuasive. Some of these attributes he developed through his experiences, others have come from national and international experiences and training. Not only has he demonstrated his capability to apply knowledge and skills but also he has shown his creativity in adapting them contextually. Courage and strategic thinking have enabled the principal to break the bureaucratic, cultural, religious and social barriers that often block school improvement. While personal qualities cannot necessarily be acquired through training programmes, they can be acknowledged, aspired to and further developed. Identification of these skills and qualities can be seen as a useful step in developing professional development programmes for principals.

Empowering teachers

This case study of Nazrul's leadership is important because the changes he has planned and implemented contribute to improvement in student learning. Much international literature on improving learning focuses on teacher skills (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009) but Bangladesh has lacked examples from its own context. This study provides an example in Bangladesh of how school structures and culture have been reshaped to involve teachers actively in the reform process, allowing them to be more dynamically involved in guiding student learning. Within the context of traditional teacher-centric teaching, it has demonstrated how a principal can create opportunities to make classrooms more participative and to motivate teachers to work collaboratively. Relationship building and power sharing with teachers by the principal has made the school into a community that can learn better together.

While lack of training, educational background and limited resources are recognised obstructions to professional development of teachers in Bangladesh

secondary education; this study provides understanding of a practical example where teachers' skills can be fostered. The principal is the facilitator and resource provider in the reform process but teachers have been made the active agents of the change in a move towards distributive leadership. It is clear that reform has been successful due to co-operation between the principal and teachers and their co-construction of strategies to improve teaching and learning. In these ways, Nazrul has begun to develop a platform for his teachers where they can claim success in facilitating students learning and achievement. In the reform process at Shanjeebon School the significant shifts of variables are leading teachers to expand their professional responsibility by not only focussing on their individual practice but also seeing themselves as part of a larger community that is concerned with learning. The shift has enabled them to consider how to better support learning rather than simply focussing on the act of teaching.

Creating learning spaces in class and community

This research has examined practices that allow students to learn despite the realities of having very large classes, which had previously led to disengagement from learning for many. The principal overcame the problems of paucity of student involvement and active participation in the large classes by introducing cluster committees where students share questions and knowledge, as well as checking progress. Developing students *latent intellect* is the policy imperative in Bangladesh (MOE, 2010), and this research examines expansion of the ways student learning can be promoted through creating environments that empower students, by navigating round existing barriers and providing experiential approaches to content knowledge. Nazrul has encouraged teachers to start the move from teaching just what is in the books towards more participatory teaching methods by introducing experiential learning with involvement of students in community activities. This change has contributed to making the curriculum content more authentic and has connected the students more meaningfully with their wider community.

Community projects have motivated students to take on more responsibility for themselves and for the wellbeing of their family and community. Whilst poverty and need for children to work are identified as significant barriers to student enrolment and participation at secondary schools in Bangladesh, with the highest dropout rate for slum children, Nazrul's practice has challenged the inevitability of such outcomes. Whereas Bottrell and Goodwin (2011c) and Toshalis (2015) argued that children's family background reproduces existing socioeconomic stratification, the practices in Shanjeebon School indicate ways of working towards greater social equity by better addressing community concerns and needs.

As reported in Chapter Three, an objective of secondary education is to prepare skilled manpower and to enable students to take an active part in society. In many schools there is little evidence of practices to support this objective. However the various initiatives undertaken by Nazrul to engage teachers and students in the community show how such preparation might be possible.

Bringing parents and community into the school

Nazrul's practice provides example of how parents can be involved in a school. Nazrul reported how student achievement improved when the relationships between school and parents, and with the wider community, were fostered. Nazrul has developed a broad range of strategies to engage parents in their children's learning and to develop a sense of shared concern and responsibility between school and the wider community. The initiatives for parental engagement in Shanjeebon School have become an important part of the school's approach to teaching; parents are now considered to be an integral part of the learning process.

The principal's flexibility in arranging face-to-face meetings with parents and his consideration of the demands of their employment have encouraged parents to visit school. His respect of local customs has made it more welcoming for parents

to come to the school. In Bangladesh the extent to which stakeholders, namely students, teachers and parents, can develop communication and relationships tends to depend on the socio-economic status of the community. In order to improve student learning, the principal is aware of the need to assist students with specific economic needs so introduced special funding arrangements to support needy parents. In return the community supported the school and trustingly gave permission for students to learn through a number of service projects.

Identifying blocks and transforming apparent walls into doors

One leadership skill examined in this study is the ability to identify barriers to the achievement of vision and to either remove the barrier or to find ways through or around it. The sections that follow discuss obstacles to school improvement that recur in Bangladesh and highlight how the principal dealt with each of these obstructions.

Not stopping with the problem

In popular and media discussions problems are readily identified but few principals are able to develop solutions. For the school in this study the parents' educational background, especially illiteracy, is a problem shared by many in the surrounding community that stops parents from coming into the school and from supporting student learning at home. Nazrul could not solve the problem of illiteracy but he did develop a strategy whereby illiteracy did not prevent parents from monitoring progress in the children's school notebooks. The ability to monitor their children's progress gave parents more confidence in becoming involved in their children's education.

In a slum community, sickness from bacterial and viral attack is common. Introducing a simple but effective hand wash programme in school and community and making students aware of the benefit of eating healthy food contributed to reducing the sickness of students and community people.

Although the principal could not assure good practices for all community members, the awareness has contributed positively to student attendance and so to student learning.

Finding a principal in his office at times when parents are able to visit is often a problem in many schools and cultural custom demotivates parents from visiting a principal at any time. However, this principal made parents feel at ease by allowing them to come in informal dress, offering open access and making himself available in his office at a time that suited parents.

Stretching limited resources

Lack of resources is a problem in Shanjeebon School as it is in many other schools in Bangladesh. A low-income community that struggles to pay minimum tuition fees impacts the school's income and budget preparation. However Nazrul plans strategically to ensure availability of necessary resources. Rather than bemoaning the limits of government funding and pushing for income generation by the school, he focused on reorganising his available resources and allocating them according to priorities. For instance, while he was unable to reduce student numbers in each class by hiring more teachers, clustering students and encouraging the student leaders to work as teachers' assistants enabled him to resolve the problem within his existing resources.

Overcoming resistance

As is recognised in the literature, resistance is a predictable part of any reform process (Fullan, 2001a, 2007). Many principals who want to reform their schools in Bangladesh encounter strong resistance from various stakeholders. For example, in this study, introducing extra-curricular activities at school initially activated strong resistance from the parents. So Nazrul arranged for special coaching for those involved in extra-curricular activities that ensured that students' results did not suffer but rather improved; he used this as evidence to convince parents of the worth of the programme. Another significant example

was how he ensured that parents would attend the first parent meeting by requiring students to collect their parents' signatures to indicate attendance.

Making students attentive

Student participation and engagement in class and at home are often at the centre of discussions about quality education. In Bangladesh principals and teachers seldom think about the obstacles students face in class and at home. Many students in Shanjeebon School do not have anyone at home to help them with their learning, and their homes do not have the resources to provide a study environment, and some parents and relatives create barriers to study by watching television or sharing the room. To overcome these barriers, the principal initiated programmes to allow all learning assignments to be completed at school with help of teachers and student peers. While this strategy puts an extra workload on teachers and cluster leaders, it has developed a collaborative learning environment at school. A system of team learning, supported by close seating, has motivated students to participate by talking and sharing their ideas. This kind of collaboration has helped reduce inequity among students.

Adapting the curriculum to suit real life

As discussed in Chapter Three, research and agency reports claim that the Bangladeshi curriculum is elite and removed from the realities of life (Ilon, 2000; UNESCO, 2011) and that students need more opportunities to get experiences in serving their community and country. It is claimed that teachers are focused on examinations because of the importance of marks for students to gain entry to higher education or the job market. The projects initiated by the principal have shown, within the limits in present conditions, how the content in books can be connected to real life experiences for students. For example, the tree plantation and healthy food programmes made students aware of their present health needs and of protecting the environment for the future. At the same time, while

they are adding to the wellbeing of the community, teachers have still been able to remain focused on examination preparation.

Teachers and professionalism

Lack of teaching skills and professional commitment, poor educational background of teachers, shortage of training, large classrooms and salary structure are identified as constraints on quality teaching in classrooms (Ahmed et al., 2006). This principal has enabled his teachers to rethink their professional commitment, their teaching styles and how they can take care of students and communicate to parents. While the principal cannot increase the teacher - student ratio, his idea of clustering students to allow them to help each other has contributed to better class management. Engaging teachers in setting goals at the beginning of each year as well as internal workshops has helped the teachers to focus on learning and their teaching capability. The faculty system has encouraged teachers to communicate, coordinate and collaborate for the sake of their professional development and improved learning.

SMC use of power

Complaints about how the SMC functions are a common occurrence in many schools across the country. Chapters Two and Three showed how the SMC works to benefit or oppose school development. This study examined examples of how the SMC at one stage created obstacles for the school management and how the principal overcame these challenges. As the gun story in Chapter Five showed, the principal often faced serious, even life-threatening risks but by focussing on goals and operating with sincerity and honesty, he found a way forward.

Dealing with poverty

In Bangladesh, the need to overcome poverty has been identified as the most significant reason for providing quality education in national and international reports (Ahmad, 2007; UNESCO, 2011). Policy makers, society and principals

often point at poverty as the block to progressing towards quality education. This principal has challenged this idea. Through his innovative ideas and strategic pathways the principal has demonstrated that if school and community work collaboratively then the school can sideline poverty to develop good citizens then the community changes to be in line with the positive outcomes from changes made at the school.

What I learnt from this study?

This section discusses aspects of my own learning about research, leadership and education.

Looking through local lenses

As a researcher the most significant learning for me throughout this study has been to shift my ideas about how to conduct a study. My initial approach, during developing the proposal for this study, was dependent on international literature and theories to understand and critique school leadership in Bangladesh. Initially the dominance of the international literature prevented me from thinking about differences in terms of context, culture or time in which the studies in the literature I read were conducted. I also did not think about how apt they might be to apply to school practices in Bangladesh. I did not even consider the diversity of local context and culture. However, through my study I have begun to develop awareness of the need to look through local lenses as well as to consider the suggestions in the international literature of leadership. My learning is still in progress and will probably be a process to be continued lifelong.

This research has led me to appreciate the importance of recognising who is offering information and what perspectives they are speaking from. For example it was clear that some members of the SMC had very different attitudes to the wearing of uniform from that of Nazrul, I realised how important it is not only to

record actions and outcomes but also to investigate the reasons individuals have for the stances they take.

Learning how to develop trustful relationships with participants has been another learning curve for me in this research project. Whilst developing relationships is emphasised as being important for qualitative data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Stake, 2010), it is not easy to understand the scope of what might be required until it is put to the test. It can be quite confusing to understand to what extent and how such relationships need to be developed. I found a significant difference between my earlier research and this study because of the relationships with participants. The professional dialogues that evolved from the relationship with the principal allowed me to collect some important stories that would not be shared if I conducted more formal interviews or observations. For instance, the stories of breaking the syndicate of SMC members in the process of teacher recruitment and overcoming risk of being threatened at gunpoint are not stories that are readily told.

There is more than theory

The principal in this study demonstrated specific personal traits and qualities to reform the school. His vision, goal setting, relationship building, intelligence and creative ideas have affirmed him as an exceptional leader. When I examined his leadership it was clear that he developed these qualities due to his interest and sincerity without knowing the theories in-depth. Although he received some training about aspects of leadership and management in different fields, his awareness and intelligence to learn ideas and his drive to implement them in his school, originated from his own vision and understanding rather than from theory.

His initiatives are examples of how ideas can be borrowed from other contexts and adapted to a localised context. For instance, he incorporated the ideas of student leadership from what he saw in the USA and his ideas about teacher

leadership from New Zealand. He has implemented these successfully by redesigning them and adapting them for the particular context of his school. It suggests that there is no prescription that would work for all principals but rather that principals should gather together all they know from literature, training and experience then develop their own approaches, depending on their context.

There were strong indications that the principal's leadership enabled teachers, students and parents to engage actively in their school reform. Whereas Bangladesh has provided pedagogical training of all teachers and is currently facing criticism for not succeeding in making the classrooms participatory, this principal has demonstrated how to implement effective changes in his school. I have come to believe principal leadership has more potential for making internal changes to school culture and education reform than has prescriptive training for teachers. This research has led me to believe that principals could overcome the constraints in their schools that are often considered as insurmountable.

Implications

This study offers the following implications for policy, principals and other researchers.

For policy

This research has provided examples of principal leadership in fostering teacher leadership, student engagement and making school-community partnerships in a secondary school in Bangladesh. An examination of these qualities and the ways they were translated into action is of particular interest for determining future directions in policy and for content of leadership training courses.

Examining particularities of leadership of one principal shows how the styles and actions of leadership are deeply rooted and embedded in the school context and must be developed based on contextual factors such as the society, economy

and culture. Thus this study brings forth the importance of consideration of case studies as a basis for developing educational policy in Bangladesh.

Developing policy based on local research may be more useful than prescriptive programmes from donor agencies that follow examples from other international contexts that may not transfer or adapt easily to the Bangladesh situation. At this time, Bangladesh education largely depends on advice from donor agencies developed by international researchers and the resultant significant gap between policy and implementation is recognised. This study has shown that policy can be developed from practices at ground level that support the communities the schools are serving.

The multifaceted experiences of this principal that has made him an innovative and creative leader indicate the need for more comprehensive training for the principals in secondary schools. The examples provided in this research provide a base for consideration in developing such training and for conducting further research to enrich the training.

Given the increasing workload for principals in schools, policy that encourages principals to distribute power, leadership and responsibilities with teachers would potentially reduce their pressure of work and foster teacher skills in teaching and learning and that would consequently develop teachers as future leaders.

Principals are still considered as administrators and managers in education policy in Bangladesh. To ensure quality, considering principals as leaders rather than simply administrators would help since it would make them responsible for setting goals and leading the school for improved learning by engaging teachers, students and parents in the process.

In the projects described in earlier chapters, there were many examples of curriculum ideas being adapted to fit the experiential world and to connect

content to society and culture. This study suggests that the principal's initiatives and teachers' skills are as important as curriculum modifications.

Reformation of SMC protocols is required to make the SMC effective for school development. It was evident in this study that some members deviate from the protocols and ethics intended by policy in order to pursue their personal politics and benefits. How to get the right people involved in SMC is an issue for policy.

Although parents and community are involved with secondary school management through SMC, policy needs to consider developing the kinds of partnerships between school and parents and community that benefited this school.

This research suggests that community service and experiential learning potentially develop students as aware and active citizens. This is one of the goals of education policy in Bangladesh so there is need to create spaces for experiential learning at school and community.

For principals

Principals can break the boundaries of traditional schooling within the limitations of the centralised education system in Bangladesh. This principal's interest, courage, relationship building and systematic work enabled the school to create pathways of overcome barriers and to open new doors for learning.

If principals share power and responsibility with teachers, it nurtures their skills in taking leadership and develops them professionally. For example, creating faculties potentially reduces workload and provides and develops opportunities for professional and collaborative learning that could enhance teaching and student learning.

Engaging teachers in school decision-making makes them part of the reform process. Principals and students might benefit if they explore how to involve

teachers in collaborative groups for planning and evaluating progress of teaching and learning during the school year.

Considering the importance of context in this study indicates how contextual factors can contribute to finding solutions for problems. Because this principal understands how contextual factors create problems, he was able to look for creative solutions that suit the local community. A model is offered as a framework to help other principals take these factors into consideration.

Strategic resourcing enables principals to provide necessary facilities. While all principals work within the limitations of physical and human resources, setting priorities and allocating existing resources strategically can enable them to maximise the usefulness of what they can develop in their schools. For example, reshaping classrooms and reorganising students into groups allowed teachers to dedicate time to taking better care of individual students in class, and students got more opportunities to work collaboratively in a group. This provides a solution to learning in large classrooms.

Principals can develop effective partnerships between school and parents and the community that allow experiential learning for students and community service for the community. In such partnerships, principals need to consider community issues and values and to listen to parents, in order to find ways to connect subject content to real life. When partnerships grow and the school and the community respect each other, student learning and social equity are supported.

For researchers

Researchers and policy makers in Bangladesh are often engaged with and value quantitative research, sometimes on a large scale (NAEM & BRAC, 2004). They seldom explore the detail and complexity of diverse social, economical and cultural factors that influence outcomes in schools. In contrast this study has

demonstrated how an in-depth case study, that explores leadership qualities and contextual factors, can provide ideas that can potentially improve learning in Bangladesh schools. Case studies in local contexts can provide empirical and well-grounded outcomes to inform future educational practices and policy making.

Concluding the journey and future research

This research journey started as a way of examining the practices of an innovative principal and his school, to find and contribute empirical examples for developing models of effective school leadership. It has identified leadership qualities and strategies that have the potential to enable principals to envision a promising future that will open and make new doors to reform their schools. Although the study is focused on the particularities of one specific school in Bangladesh and it is recognised that other schools will need to modify and adapt to draw together unique details of strategy according to their specific contexts, the change initiatives and leadership qualities.

Several areas of further research have become evident through this study that looked mainly through a principal's lens. Taking different lenses, from teachers, students and parents, gives multifaceted information about suitable practices to enhance student learning. Further exploration of how the SMC has been active in Shanjeebon School reform may contribute to understandings about effective ways to operate SMC in Bangladesh schools. Indeed, every school is situated in a specific context in which unique social, cultural and economic realities exist for the principal, teachers, students and parents. Individual case studies would offer rich, in-depth information about how to enhance teaching and learning within schools in Bangladesh.

In this study I have described how Nazrul has made doors for his teachers, students and community. As I conclude, I want to acknowledge the energy and generosity not only of Nazrul, the leader, but also all the people in the school and

community who strive to create better futures for the students and for the community as a whole. I also want to thank them all for the way they have opened the door for me to understand more about leadership. I hope that, by reporting their enterprise, I can open the door a little wider to allow others to also enter and explore how innovative leadership can serve educational needs in Bangladesh.

Glossary

Adarsha: Ideal

Addhakkho: Principal

Adab: A cultural way to show respect to seniors

Alem: Learned person in Islam

Ashen: Come in

Bangaliana: Bengali culture

Basanta Utsab: Spring festival in Bangladesh

Borka: A long and loose garment covering the whole body from head to feet

Buying House: An agent for foreign buyers who are interested in buying garments from Bangladesh

Caretaker Government: A form of government system in which the country is ruled by a selected government for an interim period during the transition from one elected government to another

Chakri: Job

Eve-teasing: Street harassment or molestation of women by men

Gur: Raw Sugar

Hartal: Strike

Hijab/Parda: A specific form of veil worn by some Muslim girls/women

Imam: Who leads worship services in the mosque

Jummah: Friday midday prayer at the mosque for Muslims

Jimmy: Hostage

Lungi: A traditional garment worn around the waist

Korta: One kind of shirt for men

Mastan: Law-breakers

Making a Door

Mela: Open air fair

Mongol Shobhajatra: A traditional colourful procession on the first day of Bangla new year

Muri: Rice pop

Nekab: A cloth that covers the face as a part of sartorial hijab

Ovivabok: Parent or caregiver of a child

Panta Ilish: Soaking rice (in water overnight) and Hilsa fish

Pitha: Rice cake

Pradayak: Embarrassing

Provat Feri: A barefoot march to the monument paying respect to the language martyrs

Pohela Boishakh: 1st day of Bangla Calendar

Shalishee: Community court

SMC: School Managing Committee

SSC: Secondary School Certificate

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Records of SSC Examination Results

Year	Total students		Grading System								Pass Rate %
		GPA-5	A	B	C	D	E	F	S	Total Pass	
2004	151	4	40	38	38	X	X	31	X	120	79.47
2005	164	6	63	40	29	14	X	12	X	152	92.68
2006	103	11	72	13	04	01	X	02	X	101	98.06
2007	162	20	103	32	5	X	X	02	X	160	98.77
2008	183	52	112	12	6	X	X	01	X	182	99.45
2009	180	35	111	32	1	X	X	01	X	179	99.44
2010	188	32	113	35	6	X	X	02	X	186	99.00
2011	226	51	152	17	X	X	X	06	X	220	97.35
2012	244	48	146	41	08	01	X	X	X	244	100
2013	234	37	139	51	05	X	X	2	X	232	99.15

Appendix 2: Cleanliness data collection form

Form of Survey

Shanjeebon School
Connecting Classrooms Project

Obsession of “Global Hand Washing Day”

Name	:	<input type="text"/>
Family Member	:	<input type="text"/>
Income person	:	<input type="text"/>
Income source	:	<input type="text"/>
Monthly Income	:	<input type="text"/>
Medical Expenses	:	<input type="text"/>
Suspicious Person	:	<input type="text"/>
Living Area	:	<input type="text"/>
Short History of family	:	

Appendix 3: Consent form for principal

Telephone: +64211046971, +8801914959898
Email: abu.salahuddin@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
abu.salahuddin@du.ac.bd
Date:



Project: Leadership for change: Examining practices in a Bangladesh secondary school
Consent Form for Principal

I have been given information on this project, and have been given an opportunity to ask questions regarding any aspect of it that I do not understand. I understand what will be required of me if I participate in this research project.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary, and that if I do participate I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If I withdraw, the researcher will do his best to remove any information relating to me, provided this is practically achievable.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me.

I understand that I have the freedom to choose pseudonyms to use in the presentations and publications of this research to remain anonymous.

(Please indicate your preferred pseudonym)

- ☐ Please use the pseudonym for my school _____.
- ☐ Please use the pseudonym for me _____.

I understand that all raw data will be held securely and kept for a minimum period of 5 years following completion of the project and then destroyed. I also understand that the data may be used for publication.

I understand that I can receive a copy of the report of this study to my e-mail address given below. *(Please tick the appropriate box)*

- ☐ I would like to receive a report of the study to be sent to me at _____.
(Indicate your preferred email address).
- ☐ I do not want to receive the report of this study.

I understand that if I have any question about the study, I can contact the researcher via the details he has provided above. I also understand that this project has received ethical approval from the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury. If I have a complaint about the study, I may contact either Abu Salahuddin (email: abu.salahuddin@pg.canterbury.ac.nz, cell: +88 019 14959898) or the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

By signing below, I hereby agree to participate in this study.

Name :
Date :
Signature :
Cell/ Phone Number :

Please return this completed consent form to Mr. Abu Salahuddin in the envelope provided by 01/04/2013.

University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. www.canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 4: Consent form for teacher

Telephone: +64211046971, +8801914959898
Email: abu.salahuddin@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
abu.salahuddin@du.ac.bd
Date:



Project: Leadership for change: Examining practices in a Bangladesh secondary school Consent Form for Teacher

I have been given information on this project, and have been given an opportunity to ask questions regarding any aspect of it that I do not understand. I understand what will be required of me if I participate in this research project.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary, and that if I do participate I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If I withdraw, the researcher will do his best to remove any information relating to me, provided this is practically achievable.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me.

I understand that I have the freedom to choose a pseudonym to use in the presentations and publications of this research to remain anonymous.

☒ Please use the pseudonym for me _____. (Indicate your preferred pseudonym)

I understand that all raw data will be held securely and kept for a minimum period of 5 years following completion of the project and then destroyed. I also understand that the data may be used for publication.

I understand that I can receive a copy of the report of this study to my e-mail address given below. (Please tick the appropriate box)

☐ I would like to receive a report of the study to be sent to me at _____. (Indicate your preferred email address).

☐ I do not want to receive the report of this study.

I understand that if I have any question about the study, I can contact the researcher via the details he has provided above. I also understand that this project has received ethical approval from the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury. If I have a complaint about the study, I may contact either Abu Salahuddin (email: abu.salahuddin@pg.canterbury.ac.nz, cell: +88 019 14959898) or the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

By signing below, I hereby agree to participate in this study.

Name :

Date :

Signature :

Cell/ Phone Number :

Please return this completed consent form to Mr. Abu Salahuddin in the envelope provided by 01/04/2013.

University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. www.canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 5: Consent form for SMC member/parent

Telephone: +64211046971, +8801914959898
Email: abu.salahuddin@pg.canterbury.ac.nz abu.salahuddin@du.ac.bd
Date:



Project: Leadership for change: Examining practices in a Bangladesh secondary school
Consent Form for SMC member/Parent
(will be translated into Bangla as needed)

I have been given information on this project, and have been given an opportunity to ask questions regarding any aspect of it that I do not understand. I understand what will be required of me if I participate in this research project.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary, and that if I do participate I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If I withdraw, the researcher will do his best to remove any information relating to me, provided this is practically achievable.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and that any published or reported results will not identify me.

I understand that I have the freedom to choose a pseudonym to use in the presentations and publications of this research to remain anonymous.

☒ Please use the pseudonym for me _____. *(Indicate your preferred pseudonym)*

I understand that all raw data will be held securely and kept for a minimum period of 5 years following completion of the project and then destroyed. I also understand that the data may be used for publication.

I understand that I can receive a copy of the report of this study to my e-mail address given below. *(Please tick the appropriate box)*

☐ I would like to receive a report of the study to be sent to me at _____.
(Indicate your preferred email address).

☐ I do not want to receive the report of this study.

I understand that if I have any question about the study, I can contact the researcher via the details he has provided above. I also understand that this project has received ethical approval from the Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury. If I have a complaint about the study, I may contact either Abu Salahuddin (email: abu.salahuddin@pg.canterbury.ac.nz, cell: +88 019 14959898) or the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

By signing below, I hereby agree to participate in this study.

Name :

Date :

Signature :

Cell/ Phone Number :

Please return this completed consent form to Mr. Abu Salahuddin in the envelope provided by 01/04/2013.

University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. www.canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 6: Consent form for students

Telephone: +64211046971, +8801914959898
Email: abu.salahuddin@pg.canterbury.ac.nz
abu.salahuddin@du.ac.bd
Date:



Project: Leadership for change: Examining practices in a Bangladesh secondary school

Consent Form for Student

(Please tick each box)

- ☐ I have read the information sheet and understand what will be required of me if I participate in this project.
- ☐ I understand that my interview will be audio-taped.
- ☐ I have read the information letter and understand that all information collected will only be accessed by the researcher and his supervisors and that it will be kept confidential and secure for a minimum period of 5 years following completion of the project and then destroyed. I understand that the data may be used for publication.
- ☐ I understand that I have the freedom to choose a pseudonym to use in the presentations and publications of this research to remain anonymous.

Please use the pseudonym for me _____. (Please indicate your preferred pseudonym)

- ☐ I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary, and that if I do participate I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If I withdraw, the researcher will do his best to remove any information relating to me, provided this is practically achievable.
- ☐ I understand that I can receive a copy of the report of this study to my e-mail address given below. (Please tick the appropriate box)

☐ I would like to receive a report of the study to be sent to me at _____ (Indicate your preferred email address).

☐ I do not want to receive the report of this study.

☐ I understand that if I have any question about the study, I can contact the researcher via the details he has provided above. If I have a complaint about the study, I may contact either Abu Salahuddin (email: abu.salahuddin@pg.canterbury.ac.nz, cell: +88 019 14959898) or the Chair, Educational Research Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

By signing below, I hereby agree to participate in this study.

Full Name :

Class :

Signature :

Date :

Please return this completed consent form to Mr. Abu Salahuddin in the envelope provided by 01/04/2013.

University of Canterbury Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand. www.canterbury.ac.nz